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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 10 October 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 10 octobre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Aggregate and
Petroleum Resources
Statute Law
Amendment Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 modifiant de lois
en ce qui concerne
les ressources en agrégats
et les richesses pétrolières



Chair: Jack Carroll
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 10 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 10 octobre 1996

*The committee met at 1006 in committee room 1.*AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS
ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Consideration of Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning, and welcome to the standing committee on general government. There is one small housekeeping item that we have to deal with first. Mrs Pupatello?

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I'd like to move adoption of the subcommittee report of the standing committee on general government.

"1. That hearings continue in Toronto on Thursday, 10 October 1996.

"2. That witnesses are allotted 20-minute time slots.

"3. That the committee invite ministry staff to appear in Toronto on Thursday, 10 October 1996, commencing at 5 pm to provide a 20-minute technical briefing followed by a 15-minute response from each of the opposition caucuses and a 10-minute response from the government caucus.

"4. That clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 52 commence on Thursday, 17 October 1996.

"5. That the committee invite the Minister of Natural Resources to appear before the committee at the outset of clause-by-clause on Thursday, 17 October 1996, for a 15-minute presentation.

"6. That the researcher provide the committee with a summary of recommendations."

The Chair: There are just a couple of updates on that. Number 3: The ministry staff will actually be here at 3:30, or when we commence this afternoon, because we will be dealing with all of our presentations this morning. So the ministry staff time has been changed to 3:30 or whenever question period is over this afternoon.

The second thing, item number 5: The minister has confirmed he will be here at the beginning of clause-by-clause on Thursday, October 17.

All in favour of the report? Any opposed? The report is carried.

There's just one other update. The government has committed to have any amendments it is putting forward available by Wednesday morning. Mr Klees, is that Wednesday morning?

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): Yes.

The Chair: Our first representative this morning — and we apologize for being a little bit late; it's not our custom, but we are — is the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment, represented by Linda Pim.

Mr Klees: Mr Chair, while they're coming forward, could I just ask for your indulgence? I had undertaken, in response I believe to Ms Martel's request, to table with the committee an explanation of the staffing issues around the reduction in staffing. I have that available now for distribution.

The Chair: Thank you. The clerk will pass that around.

COALITION ON THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

The Chair: Good morning, welcome. You have 20 minutes. Should you allow any time for questions at the end or in your 20 minutes, they will start with Mrs Pupatello. The floor is yours.

Ms Linda Pim: Good morning, Mr Chair and members of the committee. My name is Linda Pim and with me is David Hahn. We are the two co-presidents of the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment. The Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment, or CONE, very much appreciates this opportunity to share with your committee our serious concerns with Bill 52.

By way of background, CONE was founded in 1978. It's an umbrella group of environmental organizations, and there are many thousands of individual members and supporters. The six organizations currently represented on our board are the Bruce Trail Association, the Bruce Peninsula Environment Group, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Ontario Streams and the Sierra Club of Eastern Canada.

CONE has worked consistently for the protection of the Niagara Escarpment and its many values to Ontario society. We were full participants in hearings on the original Niagara Escarpment plan in the early 1980s and on the five-year review of the plan in 1992-93. We have been involved in monitoring development up and down the escarpment and in educational activities to heighten

public understanding and appreciation of the escarpment. We have participated in several government studies on the environmental impacts of various kinds of development on the escarpment. The coalition was honoured to receive the Lieutenant Governor's conservation award for 1995, recognizing excellence in environmental protection and resource conservation.

We will restrict our comments on Bill 52 to aggregate resources; we have not been involved in petroleum resource issues.

The Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment felt that it was important to make a submission to you on Bill 52 because the matter of indiscriminate aggregate extraction was the primary issue that galvanized the Ontario public about protection of the escarpment as early as the 1960s. Indeed, it was then-Premier John Robarts, acknowledging the public concern about the escarpment literally being carted away, truckload by truckload, who in 1967 called for "a wide-ranging study of the Niagara Escarpment with a view to preserving its entire length." That study commissioned by Premier Robarts was the forerunner of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, which was passed by the Progressive Conservative government in 1973, under which the Niagara Escarpment plan was approved.

Before we get into the specifics of our concerns about the bill, we would like to remind members of the committee of three very important facts. The first is that the Aggregate Resources Act, the ARA, applies throughout the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, which is a 725-kilometre strip of land running from Queenston Heights to Tobermory. The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act adds a further component of environmental review over and above the requirements of the ARA. This is in keeping with the fact that the Niagara Escarpment is recognized as a special area, warranting added environmental protection through an environmentally based land use plan, which is implemented at the provincial rather than the local level.

Our second point that we want to remind you of is that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, designated the Niagara Escarpment a world biosphere reserve in 1990, precisely because of the delicate balance that the Niagara Escarpment Plan strikes between development and the protection of significant natural areas.

Our third point is that the Niagara Escarpment Plan area is the only part of Ontario where new aggregate extraction is expressly prohibited. In other words, the environmental impacts of aggregate operations on the escarpment landscape are so significant that most of the plan area is completely off limits for new licences under the ARA. It is only in areas designated "escarpment rural area" that a new aggregate licence may even be considered, through a site-specific amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Plan. This was the case when the Niagara Escarpment Plan was first approved by the Conservative government in 1985 and was reconfirmed with the passage of the revised plan in 1994.

We'll now move on to our specific concerns about the bill. We have many concerns, and time won't permit a detailed discussion of them all. Our concerns fall under

several broad headings and we'll give you examples that illustrate some of our points. Our overall opinion is that Bill 52 is fundamentally at odds with the very purpose of the Aggregate Resources Act. Section 2 of the ARA states that one of its purposes is "to minimize adverse impact on the environment in respect of aggregate operations." In our view, Bill 52 denies this purpose.

Our first specific point is that the bill replaces legislation with regulation. In many instances, Bill 52 transfers the open process of the Legislature to the far less transparent process of regulations approved at the cabinet table. Wherever possible, we believe that legislation should spell out the intent of a bill and the main means of achieving that intent. To put all the meat of a bill beyond the reach of the Legislature is to allow the intent of the legislation to be lost through possibly inappropriate regulations.

By repealing section 8 of the ARA, Bill 52 would replace the legislated requirements of a site plan for both class A and class B licences with requirements that would be set out in regulations. Why? No reason is given. The current requirements in the ARA contain a list of items that we believe are essential if proper environmental control is to be maintained over an aggregate operation. Which items might be dropped? Is there an intention to add requirements? We don't know. The bill removes an essential control in the legislation without any reason being given. It seems that we're being asked to have faith that the regulations will call for the same site plan requirements as are now in the ARA itself. We find this completely unacceptable.

Likewise, Bill 52 removes the statutory requirement for public notice in section 11 of the act. We don't know what will replace them because the "prescribed procedures" have not yet been laid down in regulations. This essential part of the public process should remain squarely in the legislation itself. Aggregate extraction is too controversial an industrial activity to be allowed to carry on with any suspicion that the public is being excluded from decision-making. If anything, the current legislated requirements in the ARA should be strengthened, not weakened.

We can only ask: Why is this change being proposed? What is the intent? It's difficult to believe the government wants the freedom to strengthen the notice requirements; rather, it seems that the intent is to weaken them. Without any satisfactory rationale given, this provision must be dropped.

Mr David Hahn: The second concern we have about the bill, or one of the concerns, is that the right to a public hearing is seriously impaired by this bill. The public has a right to know what's going to happen; they also have an equal right to be able to comment on it. In our view, this bill removes that right. It's within the ministerial discretion to refer or not to refer a challenge to an application to the OMB. The bill does not set out any criteria under which the minister would make such a decision.

Secondly, the applicant — or at least the person who wants to have a referral — is not given any reason if the referral is refused. Compare that with the rights of the applicant for the licence. If the licence is turned down, as

a matter of legislation the applicant gets a referral to the OMB. This is unfair treatment between the two opposing points of view and it is not, in our view, acceptable.

The second concern we have is that this bill makes a mockery of any attempt to ensure compliance. The amendments to the bill would remove the responsibility for monitoring enforcement from the Ministry of Natural Resources. It means that the operations of one of the most environmentally and socially intrusive industries are monitored by the people who are carrying them out, and the government is abdicating any responsibility for seeing that the law is complied with.

How can we have confidence in a system in which those who are regulated, regulate themselves? Where's the proof that this has worked in the past? It asks the responsible operator to live by the law and possibly become uncompetitive, when somebody down the road who's not responsible will flout the law and profit by it. It seems to us that it's a major leap of faith to suggest that human nature is such that all people regulated under this act are going to regulate themselves. If they fail to regulate, the costs to the environment and to the community are very severe.

1020

We're asked to be confident that the industry can police itself, and again I ask, what is the evidence that supports this? What is the history in the past? We've heard that in the bad old days, back before the Aggregate Resources Act, pits were abandoned and operators disappeared and rehabilitation didn't take place. All that's changed now because of the legislation that's in place. If the industry was unable to police itself before, where's the evidence that they're going to be able to do that, and will do it, now?

Not all operators are unscrupulous. There are many very responsible corporate citizens out there who believe in the environment and are prepared to carry out their operations at cost to themselves in such a way as to protect the environment. But not all operators are like that. There are those who, in order to make a fast dollar, would flout the rules, try and get a competitive advantage, and in so doing cause damage that is not easily repaired, if it's even possible. The only way to ensure compliance with the law is to have a cop on the beat and the only proper cop is a cop that is a government cop, not the industry itself.

The government is spending money and taking great pains to track down people who steal from their fellow taxpayers by cheating on welfare. What about people who cheat on their fellow citizens by destroying the environment? Is that group more responsible than the welfare recipients? I think human nature is such that compliance can only be achieved by proper monitoring and enforcement.

We're not against aggregate extraction and we're not against the aggregate industry. We all recognize that the economy and lifestyle of the province are very heavily dependent on materials that are produced by the aggregate industry. We just can't exist and flourish without aggregates. We know, though, that this industry happens to be one of the most environmentally, and in many ways socially, destructive — socially to those who live in the

area. It's therefore very important that there be tight controls over the operations and that everything possible is done to mitigate the environmental and social disruption that this very necessary industry, of necessity, causes. Strong legislation is required to balance the economic necessity of extracting aggregates with the detrimental environmental effects.

Licensed properties have got to be monitored for compliance and enforcement action must be taken when somebody tries to break the rules. What we need is, as the title of your act says, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries. This bill, in our view, fails to meet the criteria set out in the bill. We've given you a couple of reasons why we think it fails to meet the criteria, and others will give you, I'm sure, some other ideas.

In our view, the bill's unacceptable. The title of the bill, to us, is Orwellian doublespeak. The actual impact of the bill is to do exactly the opposite of its purported intent. We haven't seen any reason why the bill is being brought forward in this form. What is the evidence to say that the aggregate industry is capable of policing itself? What is the intention behind removing the right of notice, the right of appeal, from the legislation? What is the reason, what is the necessity, of putting in regulation many things that we think should properly be spelled out in the legislation, things that are already spelled out in the legislation?

Before we take the steps to do these things there should be reasons put forward as to why. We think that the bill therefore is seriously flawed, has many deficiencies and we would ask that in your considerations you listen to the comments of people like ourselves and bring forward amendments that will correct the flaws in the bill. We thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and to state our points of view.

The Chair: Thank you very much. You have effectively used up all but a minute of your time. There is no effective time left for questions. Did you have a final statement that you wanted to make? Okay, thank you very much. We do appreciate your input this morning.

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next presenters are the Canadian Environmental Law Association, represented by Richard Lindgren, staff lawyer. Good morning, sir. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Richard Lindgren: Good morning, members of the committee. My name is Richard Lindgren. I am the staff lawyer with the Canadian Environmental Law Association, or CELA, and we certainly appreciate the opportunity to address this committee on Bill 52 this morning.

As some committee members are no doubt aware, CELA is a public interest group that was established in 1970 for the purpose of using and improving laws to protect the environment and to conserve natural resour-

ces. Since 1970, CELA staff lawyers have been actively involved in many cases and many law reform activities in relation to aggregate operations across Ontario. We've been involved in various matters on the Niagara Escarpment involving pits and quarries, we've been involved in Oak Ridges moraine disputes involving pits and quarries and a number of other disputes across northern and southern Ontario with respect to pits and quarry operations.

We've used that experience, that background, plus our public interest perspective, to review Bill 52. I should pause to note that I'm only going to be addressing the portions of Bill 52 that amend the Aggregate Resources Act, or the ARA. I've been at CELA for about 10 years and I cannot recall too many instances where I have received a telephone call about petroleum resources development, so I'm not going to be addressing the Bill 52 amendments to the Petroleum Resources Act. It's not something we deal with. There may or may not be problems with that industry, but if there are it's not something that I get telephone calls about.

But I do receive frequent phone calls about pits and quarries all across Ontario, pits and quarries next to or within wetlands, pits and quarries next to or within environmentally sensitive areas, pits and quarries next to or within provincial parks, the list goes on and on. That's the background that we've used to review Bill 52 and it's our conclusion that Bill 52 should not be passed in its present form. In fact, in our view, there are several key amendments to Bill 52 that should be considered in order to protect the natural environment and to protect residents living near aggregate operations.

Two weeks ago I filed a formal and I think detailed written submission to the committee. The committee members will recall that the deadline for written comments was September 23. At that point, we hadn't received confirmation that we'd be attending here today so we took the precaution of pre-filing our written submission. It was my hope and my expectation that committee members would bring their copies of that submission today so that I could answer any questions that may arise from the written submission.

But if committee members didn't bring it, that's okay because what I'm proposing to do in my remaining time is read into the record our seven key recommendations. At the conclusion of that summary of our recommendations I would be happy to take any questions, time permitting.

I should also indicate for the record that the brief we filed on September 23 has been given committee exhibit number 1/05/015, so again, if committee members didn't bring this document with them they can retrieve it at some later date and go through it. The recommendations that I am about to read into the record are found at page 17 of that brief, so that's where they can be located if further recourse is needed to them.

1030

Before I go through the recommendations, I should advise committee members that had the opportunity to review very carefully the Hansard record of the proceedings of this committee on September 11 and 12, when presentations were received in Milton and Niagara Falls.

I've also had an opportunity to review a number of the written submissions that have been filed with this committee by different agencies, groups and individuals. I'm actually quite pleased to see that many of the recommendations put forward by other groups and individuals look pretty similar to the ones we're about to put forward.

I was particularly tickled to see that I could agree with most of the positions put forward by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. It's not often that we're able to agree with AMO but I found myself in complete agreement with most of their recommendations. Unfortunately, and perhaps predictably, I can't say the same thing for the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario, as will be apparent when I go through the recommendations.

As I say, the recommendations are reproduced at page 17 of my brief, and if I could, I'll start by going through each of the recommendations. I'm pretty optimistic there'll be some time for questions at the conclusion.

Our first recommendation is with respect to the proposed Aggregate Resources Trust.

Recommendation 1(a): Bill 52 should be amended to permit the minister to only designate a crown employee as a trustee of the Aggregate Resources Trust, or alternatively, permit the minister to establish a multistakeholder advisory committee regarding the trust.

Recommendation 1(b) is to amend the bill to ensure that trust expenditures are expressly limited to environmental protection, resource conservation or rehabilitation purposes. There's a fair amount of open-ended discretion in the current provisions with respect to what trust funds can be used for. We would like to see that tightened up, if possible.

Then moving on to recommendation 2, there's a series of them here. They deal with public notice and public hearing rights under Bill 52. Actually, I'll back up.

Recommendation 2(a) can be summarized as follows: Bill 52 should be amended to eliminate the distinction between class A and B licences. In our view, there's no environmental rationale for continuing that distinction under Bill 52.

Recommendation 2(b): The bill should be amended to retain the prescribed content requirements for site plans and reports in the Aggregate Resources Act itself rather than bearing them in the regulations that don't have the kind of open, transparent nature associated with legislation. We would much prefer to see that detail retained in the legislation itself as opposed to put in some regulations that have not yet been circulated or drafted, as far as I can tell.

Recommendation 3(a): Bill 52 should be amended to retain and enhance public notice requirements in the ARA rather than in regulations. As you know, the proposal is to prescribe notice and comment opportunities by regulation, so a lot of the existing requirements will be gutted in favour of some regulation that we haven't seen yet, and quite frankly, I'm not prepared to buy a pig in a poke. I'm not prepared to accept that we're going to see the same current requirements reproduced or replicated in these future regulations.

Recommendation 3(b) is that Bill 52 should be amended to retain the current 45-day appeal period for

the filing of objections and hearing requests. Again, this should be found in the legislation rather than regulation.

Recommendation 3(c): Maintain the current ARA provisions which require the minister to refer an application and objections to the Ontario Municipal Board upon request by any person unless the hearing request is frivolous and vexatious. We don't like the new, open-ended discretion of the minister to refuse to send anything on to a hearing if he or she sees fit.

Recommendation 3(d): Delete the power of the minister to direct the OMB to consider only the issues specified in the referral. That provision in Bill 52 is completely unacceptable and unfair. It allows the Minister of Natural Resources, who's a party to the proceedings, to skew the proceedings, to take the contentious issues off the table. If I could use an analogy, you wouldn't permit the crown necessarily to dictate to a court what issues are on or off the table in a criminal trial. I suggest that the same principle should apply here. Once there's a hearing, there's a hearing and the board decides what's relevant to the issues in dispute.

Recommendation 3(e) is that the board should be empowered to impose, rather than recommend, conditions of approval. As you're aware, Bill 52 will give the board the decision-making authority as to whether or not the licence should be granted, but the minister still has the power to impose terms and conditions. In our view, the decision to approve or not approve is often tied up with what conditions, if any, will be imposed. It makes a lot of sense, in our view, to give the board the power to impose the conditions and not leave it to the minister down the road.

Recommendation 3(f): Delete the power of the OMB to refuse to hold a hearing after the objection has been referred to the board by the minister.

Recommendation 3(g): Require adequate public notice and EBR, or Environmental Bill of Rights, registry notice where the minister makes a proposal regarding the issuance or refusal of a licence, licence conditions, site plan amendments, licence transfer or licence revocation.

Finally, under recommendation 3(h), Bill 52 should be amended to ensure the application of section 43 of the OMB act and section 21.1 of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act to decisions and orders of the board under the ARA.

Those provisions allow the board, in certain circumstances, to go back and revisit previous decisions if circumstances warrant that reconsideration. Given the fact that the board, under the ARA, will be making very significant long-term decisions about a very environmentally significant activity, namely, aggregate extraction, I see no compelling reason why agencies, ministries and interested people, shouldn't be able to go back to the OMB if there has been a material change in circumstances or if new information about new impacts comes to light.

Moving on to recommendation 4, it's simply this: Bill 52 should be amended to retain section 17 of the existing act to ensure the continuation of regular monitoring, investigation and enforcement activities by MNR staff to the that there's any MNR staff still available to do it.

We've heard a lot of hype, a lot of noise about the self-monitoring regime that will be established under Bill 52. Quite frankly, we find it quite unacceptable. It's not an adequate substitute for a systematic program of regular monitoring, investigation and enforcement by public officials. I note that this recommendation has been made by a number of other parties appearing before this committee as well.

Recommendation 5: Bill 52 should be amended to ensure that only crown employees may be designated as inspectors under the ARA, and the bill should be amended to delete the proposed delegation of ministerial powers under part III and part V of the ARA to the Ministry of Transportation, which of course has a profound interest in ensuring that there's lots of cheap aggregate available for its various activities.

Recommendation 6 is that the bill should be amended to retain part IV of the ARA with respect to abandoned pits and quarries. It may well be that once the trust is up and running, a lot of the provisions in the current part IV of the act will be addressed, but given the paucity of detail associated with the setup, the administration, the composition of the trust and so forth, I'm not prepared to sign off on part IV, at least not at this point.

Finally, recommendation 7 is that Bill 52 should be amended to delete the minister's power to grant exemptions from aggregate permit requirements and to delete the minister's power to waive or reduce rehabilitation requirements under the legislation.

In conclusion, unless and until those recommendations are acted upon by the government, CELA cannot and does not support Bill 52. I'm not bold enough to suggest that these are the only recommendations that are necessary, nor am I suggesting that we have the magic wand solution here. There may be other ways to address the concerns we've flagged here today and in our written brief. But something has to be done to improve Bill 52.

In our opinion, Bill 52 undermines a number of important environmental protection provisions that are currently found in the Aggregate Resources Act; Bill 52, as drafted, dismantles some key monitoring and reporting requirements that are now found in the existing act; and Bill 52 creates or continues a number of problematic loopholes and perpetuates uncertainty, at least from our perspective, under the Aggregate Resources Act.

In my submission, those problems are compounded by the fact that we have not yet seen copies of any of the regulations that are going to implement the Bill 52 regime. Maybe similar concerns will be addressed, maybe they won't be, but really until they are produced, and presumably they'll be produced with some public input including input from us and other interested stakeholders, we really can't comment any further on Bill 52.

Those are my submissions. If there is any time, I'd be happy to take questions.

1040

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Thank you, Mr Lindgren. It's always a pleasure and an important part of hearings like this to have a presentation from your group because it provides us with a framework we don't often get.

Having seen governments in this province for the last several years move towards executive power taking power from the Legislature, from other tribunals around the province — this is not these guys, this is a fact of life in government in Ontario in the last three or four years. Witness Bill 171, the forest bill: the same thing, we get a shell.

Many of the concerns you've expressed are concerns that may be addressed in regulations, but nobody knows. I think you have more ground in common with the industry perhaps than you realize. They too would like to see the regulations in the legislation rather than left out there for any government at any time in the future to change in any way it might wish without much public scrutiny at all.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I should just remind my colleague that at least with Bill 171 all the technical documents went out on public hearings with people as well, so people had a chance to comment. We've repeatedly asked for both the technical documents and any regulations that might be in place, because we know work is being done on both. We had that confirmed by industry representatives who have seen some of the information. At this point, the government has refused to give that to us. The government says the regulations will go out to a large number of stakeholders. We don't know who they will be yet, although they have invited us to send forward names, so we will certainly do that.

The problem is that the regulation process is not like this legislative process. The regulations will be developed by the government. They may well be submitted to stakeholders. They will go back to cabinet and they will be approved or not approved by cabinet, and there will be no public forum like this one for people to participate. That has been our problem with this whole process all along.

The bill that we see before us is very much a shell. It asks us to trust the government in developing regulations that will hopefully enhance environmental protection, not weaken it, except I've seen the government track record over the last year and I, for one, am not convinced that when it comes to environmental protection that's what we're going to get.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): First of all, I want to congratulate CELA, because every member of our government who is familiar with your work appreciates the work of your association and the competence of the people who are involved.

One of the biggest controversies about the removal of aggregate in this province has always been what happens about rehabilitation. I think you must agree that especially under section 6 of the bill, we have a tremendous emphasis on rehabilitation.

Mr Lindgren: I can certainly agree that the word "rehabilitation" shows up in section 6. My concern is that there are other provisions in the bill that will allow the minister to waive or reduce rehabilitation requirements in the future, so even though there may be a commitment today to full rehabilitation and restoration of an agricultural use or habitat or something, down the road that can be amended, and amended with the stroke of a pen. There are lots of instances where that's occurred. Even though

rehabilitation is a good thing and everybody can support it, the track record unfortunately has been less than desirable and I don't see that being changed by Bill 52.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Lindgren. We appreciate your input here this morning.

VALERIE CRANMER AND ASSOCIATES

The Chair: Our next presenter, representing Valerie Cranmer and Associates, is Valerie Cranmer. Welcome to our committee. You have 20 minutes. Should you allow some time for questions, they would begin with Ms Martel. The floor is yours.

Ms Valerie Cranmer: Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee. I'm Valerie Cranmer, president of Valerie Cranmer and Associates. In the past I've had considerable involvement with the aggregate industry and the application of its legislation.

Prior to establishing my own firm, I was director of strategic planning with the regional municipality of Durham. In this capacity, I was responsible for the review of our official plan, which of course included a review of the aggregate policies. Achieving aggregate policies which maintain a balance between municipal and industry goals is never easy. However, by working with representatives of the industry and ministry officials, we were able to develop an excellent set of policies to guide the development of aggregate in the region for the next 25 years.

In addition, I was the region's representative on the Oak Ridges moraine technical working committee, where aggregate extraction was a major topic of discussion.

More recently, I represented the Association of Municipalities of Ontario on the provincial aggregate review committee which was established by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Bill 52 reflects the restructuring of the Ministry of Natural Resources non-renewable resources program to shift more responsibility for direct program delivery to the municipalities and to the industry. In the preparation of this legislation, the various approval processes were examined and standardized as much as possible with respect to the application, operational aspects and rehabilitation. As a result, many of the amendments reflect this streamlined approach. Much of the detail which is contained in the existing legislation is to be deleted and will be in the regulations, and the regulations are to be developed through consultation with key stakeholders.

In this presentation, I will address the following: the positive aspects of the proposed legislation and the areas which are of concern to me. Where appropriate, I will make suggestions how these concerns could be addressed.

Many of the applications for aggregate licences are disputed and are referred to the Ontario Municipal Board for a resolution. In the existing legislation, the Minister of Natural Resources can overrule the decision of the Ontario Municipal Board. This provision is deleted in the proposed legislation and replaced with the requirement that the Ontario Municipal Board decision be binding upon the Minister of Natural Resources. This is a very positive revision to the legislation and is in accordance

with other provincial legislation and should be retained in the final legislation.

A recurring theme throughout the legislation is the addition of responsibilities to the industry and municipalities to ensure that the applications are complete and that the prescribed notification and consultation procedures and the requirements of the licence are complied with. This shift of responsibility from the province is reflective of the province's commitment to downsize government and to place more direct responsibility in the hands of the main stakeholders. Essentially, this legislation is providing for self-regulation of the industry.

In order for this initiative to be effective, I believe all aggregate operators should be required to be members of the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario and that there should be a commitment by all three parties — the province, the APAO and the municipalities — to improve communication.

Municipalities, at this time of considerable restructuring and financial restrictions, may not be in a position to accept a greater role and responsibility in the regulation of pits and quarries, and these governance issues have to be addressed first. In addition, municipalities will have to address the need to obtain the expertise necessary to ensure meaningful involvement in the process.

The act will establish the Aggregate Resources Trust. This trust is to collect and disburse annual licence fees, administer the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund, administer a new pooled trust fund to provide for rehabilitation where aggregate permits and licences have been revoked as a result of default, and be responsible for research into rehabilitation processes.

In accordance with the privatization of government services initiatives, the trustee will be appointed by the minister but will not be employed by the crown. In addition, the Aggregate Producers' Association will be responsible for the administration and delivery of the rehabilitation program associated with the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund. It is hoped that the establishment of this trust will result in a more effective and efficient use of the rehabilitation fund while allowing for some key and necessary research. Key to the success of the trust will be the appointment of the trustee and the establishment and maintenance of appropriate communication with municipalities.

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I believe that the proposed legislation begins to pave the way for the reduction of duplication between the licence approval process and the municipal approval process. These processes should be completely integrated in order to reduce costs both to the producer and to the municipality. In addition, it would assist the public in better understanding the process. The proposed requirement that no licence can be issued unless the site complies with all relevant zoning bylaws is a positive step.

There are a number of efficiency measures that are introduced in Bill 52 which should be retained. The six-month limitation on the suspensions of a licence aggregate permit has been removed. Rather than having to renew the suspension, the suspension will remain until the issue is resolved. In addition, permits for aggregates will no longer have an expiration date. The permit will remain

in effect as long as the operation is in compliance. Further efficiencies should result from the requirement that no prosecutions for contraventions to the act or the regulations can be commenced more than five years after the date on which the offence was committed.

An important tool for implementing this act is the regulations, as has been mentioned by the previous presenters. I understand that they are presently being prepared and much of the detail which is contained in the existing legislation will be in these regulations. It is important that these regulations be developed through true consultation, with all key stakeholders. The success of this legislation depends on the development of appropriate regulations.

In summary then, I view the proposed legislation as implementing the government's commitment to downsize and to streamline the development approval process. The positive aspects of this legislation are dependent upon the regulations. The development of appropriate regulations, developed in consultation with all key stakeholders is critical to the success. The aggregate industry is an essential industry and there must be a balance between the goals of the industry and those of government.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to address the committee and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Ms Martel: Thank you for your presentation today. You said earlier that you're part of the aggregate resources working group.

Ms Cranmer: Yes.

Ms Martel: Can I ask you then as a member of that group what your responsibilities would have been to it as an AMO representative?

Ms Cranmer: It was very difficult to determine in fact what my responsibilities were as an AMO representative, but I was there with a regional planning perspective. That was my main area of expertise.

Ms Martel: Can I ask you when you first saw a copy of this bill?

Ms Cranmer: After it was presented. The members of the committee were not aware of it being prepared until it came out.

Ms Martel: I want to follow up, because I asked Glenn Harrington the same question when we were in Milton. How does that make you feel, as a member who's participated freely trying to give your advice to a government body, that the day you see this bill is the day that it's introduced in the House?

Ms Cranmer: Actually, the whole committee was extremely upset with the way that it happened and we requested a meeting with the minister to clarify the role of the committee, because we felt that with the discussions and the stakeholders that were sitting around the table, it was very appropriate for that committee to at least be aware of what was happening with the legislation.

Ms Martel: I understand also from our meeting in Milton that the committee at that time also requested to the minister very specifically that the committee members be allowed to participate in the drafting of the regulations.

Ms Cranmer: Yes, they have, and unfortunately since I formed my own company I am no longer part of the committee so I was not aware whether there was any discussion with respect to the regulations with the committee as they were being drafted.

Ms Martel: The response we got was that the request was made to be involved in the drafting and the minister clearly told the committee they would see the regulations after they were drafted. So that's a bit problematic for people who are part of a working group who do that work for the ministry and then effectively are shut out of the process.

Why would you be concerned about the regulation process at this point? You've said several times in your presentation that the success of this bill and the success of enforcement etc really heavily depends on the regulation-making process and what it looks like.

Ms Cranmer: With taking the detail out of the legislation, I think it is critical that all of the main stakeholders are involved in those regulations to ensure that they are balanced in their content and requirements.

Mr Klees: Ms Cranmer, thank you for your presentation, very helpful. You've had extensive involvement with — or certainly familiarity with the industry over the years and you're aware of the fact that over the last number of years the majority of the pits and quarries in this province have not had the prescribed inspections. There just hasn't been, I understand, the manpower within the ministries to actually conduct these inspections. Is that your experience?

Ms Cranmer: Yes, that is.

Mr Klees: With the initiative of this bill to transfer a lot of the administrative responsibilities through the trust as well as some of the self-assessment functions, the intent, as you're aware, of the legislation is to free up those inspectors who are on staff to focus much more of their time on the actual inspection functions, with the view to actually being able to enhance the enforcement and compliance function of the ministry. Do you feel that the industry in general is responsible enough to carry out the many self-assessment functions that will be transferred to them?

Ms Cranmer: I think that for the industry to be able to carry out the self-regulating function, all of the licensed operators should be members of their association. I understand that not all of them are. In many cases the operators that the municipalities have problems with are ones who do not belong to the association. I think there seems to be a lot of goodwill — and I don't know how far the goodwill will go — with the association to ensure that the self-regulation does work, but they need to have some method of bringing under their control the operators who at the present time they do not have any association with.

Mr Klees: You've used the term "self-regulation" and I just for the record want to assert from the government's point of view that this legislation certainly does not result in self-regulation. The regulations will clearly be the responsibility of the government and in fact the ministry will continue to function as the enforcer of those regulations. What has happened, though, is that through this legislation we will be requiring the industry to assume

many of the administrative functions that heretofore the ministry has performed. I just wanted to clarify that because there is a significant difference between self-regulation and self-assessment.

Mr Michael Brown: I was interested in your views around the Aggregate Producers' Association and that you were suggesting that all aggregate producers should belong to that organization. I think one of the things we've learned through the hearings is that not all companies want to join the Aggregate Producers' and that perhaps — and this might be unfair — the real problems in the aggregates industry occur with a very small percentage of companies but they tend to be smaller companies without the resources to do many of the things the larger companies can do. Is that a fair assessment from your view?

Ms Cranmer: I come from a municipality that has a large number of pits, in the township of Uxbridge. I think some of the aggregate producers we have had difficulties with are not necessarily the small ones.

Mr Michael Brown: That's interesting.

Ms Cranmer: I agree that a large number of the problem ones may be the small ones, but I think there are also some of the larger ones as well.

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Mr Michael Brown: Would the ones at present in your community, the larger ones, be members of the Aggregate Producers' Association, or do you know?

Ms Cranmer: No, they're not at the present time — at least that's my understanding.

Mr Michael Brown: One of our concerns in this whole process has been what happens to the relatively small company. In many industries in Ontario, we are seeing consolidation after consolidation and the market becomes controlled by a relatively small number of players that are very large. I have some concern that smaller businesses will be excluded by both the way this self-monitoring is required, with the ministry I think essentially abdicating the monitoring function itself, and the fact that big companies like regulations, small companies don't. Do you have any comments on that train of thought?

Ms Cranmer: I have seen that trend happening in other industries as well, particularly the development industry, and it's a very difficult one to address. I don't know how the aggregate industry is really going to address that.

Mr Michael Brown: I thought your suggestion about being part of the aggregate producers was a way for the smaller operator to maybe share information with the larger corporations.

Ms Cranmer: Hopefully, that would happen.

The Chair: Thank you again, Ms Cranmer. We appreciate your input here this morning.

SIERRA LEGAL DEFENCE FUND

The Chair: Our next presenter is representing the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Doug Chapman, the staff lawyer. Good morning, Mr Chapman. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Doug Chapman: The Sierra Legal Defence Fund is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to environmental groups and concerned citizens. I wish to direct my comments solely to the enforcement and self-assessment aspects of this proposed legislation.

The importance of environmental legislation — we all know how important it is. It's essential to the public interest. A study for the law commission of Canada in 1984 described the regulatory process of the 1970s, going back in time, as somewhere between "cautious" and "captured by industry." I'm suggesting that the self-monitoring, self-assessment aspects of this proposed legislation are placing trust in industry where it is not due. I'm suggesting that the government policies have been captured by industry.

First of all, I should inform you that our organization is involved in assisting a woman in the Niagara Escarpment area who has found it necessary to launch a private prosecution against a member of the aggregate industry as a result of an allegation that the aggregate corporation was carrying on a development without a permit. There is nothing in the history of corporate behaviour, either in this country or anywhere in the world, that suggests that trust can be left with corporations to self-monitor themselves effectively. It was for that very reason that the Ministry of Environment and Energy formed its investigation and enforcement staff, which as it turns out is probably the most effective in Canada, and one that Ontario has always been proud of.

When we come to the aggregate industry, it's felt that they, for some reason, unlike other corporate actors, should be allowed to police themselves. We all know the massive cuts that have taken place in the Ministry of Natural Resources. It's been suggested here that the regulatory aspects of this legislation that are left with the ministry have not been handed over to industry, and I question that because of the plain lack of people to go out and inspect these pits and quarries. We all know what tremendous environmental damage can be done by this industry. I agree with the remarks that have been said today about how there are sometimes only a few bad actors, but the only way you can find out which ones they are is to go out and inspect them yourself.

Another point I wish to bring up is that studies have shown that corporations that have been inspected, investigated, prosecuted and convicted have allocated significantly more resources to protect the environment than corporations that have not faced that process. That's clear. No study can be found that suggests that a corporation can effectively protect the environment if that corporation is allowed to regulate itself or assess itself.

I'm particularly disturbed by the bill as it relates to section 17 of the existing ARA, which as you know imposed an express duty on the ministry to make inspections of these sites. I'm suggesting that there's absolutely no incentive for corporations left alone to take steps to protect the environment. In that regard I suggest that MNR must retain its policy of inspections, even to the extent of increasing the number of inspectors and investigators. Those are my submissions.

Mr Klees: Thank you for your presentation. With regard to the issue of inspection, we certainly share your

concern that the appropriate inspections are conducted, and in discussions with the industry that was front and centre. I think you'd agree that it's not a function of the number of staff people in the field relative to inspections so much as what their job description is. We might have 100 people in the field, for example, and if their job description requires them to do many other things and only a small percentage of their time can actually be focused on inspection, the number of people isn't the issue; it's the position the ministry takes on what we require the inspector to do.

One of the objectives of the ministry is to free up the functions of the inspectors so that they can focus much more attention on inspecting those sites that are a potential problem. You've agreed that the problems that occur in the industry come from a very small number of operators. One of the objectives we have is, through the self-compliance, to transfer a considerable amount of that administration and reporting to the industry with those operators who are in compliance and are operating at a high level of credibility. Very little time then is necessary for the individual staff person to actually focus on those particular sites, because they are in compliance and it takes a fairly routine review. What this would allow, though, is for much more focus on those operators who are questionable.

I'd be interested in your response to that because I want to assure you that the whole issue of inspection is very important to us, that what we felt we were achieving here was being able to concentrate on those operators who are not in compliance.

Mr Chapman: The plain answer is, sir, if you don't have enough inspectors to start with, they can't cover the territory. I prosecuted for the Ministry of the Environment for five and half years and I know how important it is to have a lot of investigators, number one.

Number two, I'm saying that you can't trust industry to provide accurate reports at the end of one year. If you don't have inspectors, how are you going to find out which ones are the bad ones and which ones are the good ones? Are you suggesting that the bad actors are going to come out with a report and say, "We've been bad last year"?

1110

Mr Klees: You say that in your experience it's important to have a lot of inspectors.

Mr Chapman: Ontario is a big province.

Mr Klees: Would you not agree that it's much more important that we have inspectors who are focused on inspection?

Mr Chapman: I would say that it's equally important to have sufficient numbers and proper training for them. That's the answer.

Mr Klees: We're not in disagreement on that point. That precisely is where we want to go as a government, to ensure that we have the appropriate number of people in the field who have adequate training and who can be focused on this issue of inspection, rather than have a proliferation of people who are doing many things that perhaps the industry can do equally or perhaps even more effectively, and allow the government to really focus on

the issue of enforcement in the interest of protecting the environment.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for coming today. One of the issues you didn't raise but I'm sure you're interested in is the penalties that this bill might, or will, inflict on companies or individuals in contravention of the act. In my experience, penalties are only effective if they're appropriate. In other words, if it's a huge penalty that you might have to pay for a minor variance, often you will not be prosecuted for it because the two don't make sense. It's like sending someone to execution for jaywalking. Maybe that's what you have to do according to law so the prosecution won't go forward.

If I'm making myself clear, I just wonder what you think of the penalty sections of this act which have been strengthened. I've not made myself totally comfortable that they are appropriate in all cases to minor variations, a minor problem versus a major one.

Mr Chapman: I was pleased to see that the penalties were increased. In reply to your question I would only say that's what judges are for, in the courts where prosecutions are brought, to weigh those factors, take them into consideration so that a small operator with a minor offence, if I can put it that way, is not going to be hammered with a huge fine. But I think the high fines have to be there. They have to be available for the worst-case scenario.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm suggesting to you, and we know it happens in the legal system, that often, because the penalty may be too severe — a suspension of your licence for a period of some time — that might not necessarily be appropriate. Or do you think it is? That's the question I'm asking. Sometimes people just don't enforce the law because they think either the cost of enforcing it or the penalty that will be imposed is too great.

Mr Chapman: I go back to what I said before. I think that's up to the judge in each individual case and I don't think you can generalize. I don't think overall the penalties are too high.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm not saying they're too high either. I'm asking you, do you think they're appropriate?

More than probably any other resource in Ontario, the government and municipalities of Ontario are in a huge conflict-of-interest situation when they look at aggregates because they are one of the largest consumers of the actual product.

Mr Chapman: Yes.

Mr Michael Brown: I wonder if you have any kind of broad philosophical view about that, because I think it colours the way we approach this whole situation; there is a huge conflict of interest. I think about half the aggregate goes to municipalities or the provincial government or agencies of the provincial government.

Mr Chapman: One answer is to have all the stakeholders have an opportunity to get together and meet and discuss it, and not the way this legislation has been put forward. There haven't been these meetings and discussions.

Mr Michael Brown: Oh, I agree.

Ms Martel: Thank you, Mr Chapman, for your presentation this morning. I noted that in your presenta-

tion you were highly critical of the government's desire to trust the industry to monitor itself. You made that point several times during your discussion. You probably expressed it more firmly than I've heard from any other presenters, and I wonder why you are feeling the way you are with respect to your not believing that the government or any of us should trust that the industry can self-monitor.

Mr Chapman: That comes from my experience as a prosecutor with the Ministry of Environment and Energy. I have had several cases where false evidence was given to the ministry by corporations. I've had many cases where corporate activities have clearly shown that they did everything they could to hide their emission or their discharge. I have spent many hours lecturing investigative people with the Ministry of Environment and Energy on the legal aspects of it. I knew all those investigators personally.

I know, I believe, what is necessary for the proper enforcement of environmental law, and that is good inspections, adequately trained inspectors and investigators, and I firmly believe in using that process, including charges and penalties, as a way of bringing corporate activity into line to protect the environment.

It's almost a contradiction in terms to ask a corporation whose reason to exist is to make a profit, and the more profit the better it is, to monitor itself. It has not worked. I would like to hear of any study anyone has ever heard of in the world that has suggested that corporations, when they're left to monitor and police themselves, effectively protect the environment. I know there is no such study.

That's why, maybe, I speak so strongly. I'm worried about the protection of the environment as it relates to the aggregate industry and the effect of this bill.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Chapman. We appreciate your being here this morning and giving us your input.

Is our next presenter, Stuart Marwick, here? No.

NORTHERN ONTARIO AGGREGATE PRODUCERS

The Chair: Marcel Ethier, chair of Northern Ontario Aggregate Producers, you get to move up in the program. Welcome to our committee. Maybe we could just get you to identify yourselves for the record. The floor is yours.

Mr Marcel Ethier: My name is Marcel Ethier. I am president and part owner of Ethier Sand and Gravel Ltd from Sudbury, a mid-sized company producing aggregates in the Sudbury area and in northern Ontario.

The company was formed in the late 1930s by my father, who passed away in 1964. We employ approximately 40 to 65 employees, depending on the season and the amount of work there is in the area. We own seven licensed properties. We also have 10 aggregate permits, which are on crown land, for a total of 17 pits or quarries. We generate approximately \$5.5 million to \$6 million to the local economy of Sudbury and northern Ontario.

We operate two gravel pits year-round. The others are seasonal, depending on where the work is. We also operate a quartz quarry for silica and decorative stone and we ship the decorative stone to parts of Michigan state,

Quebec and southern Ontario. The silica is mostly used in the mining industry, in smelting the ore.

I am also chairman of the APAO northern Ontario committee, a committee specifically struck to deal with northern Ontario issues and represent aggregate producers throughout northern Ontario. We have representative members attending meetings from northern Ontario, Sault Ste Marie — that's Roy Bertolo here — Timmins, Parry Sound, New Liskeard and North Bay; Thunder Bay attended only a few of our meetings.

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I am speaking today on behalf of both Ethier Sand and Gravel and northern Ontario aggregate producers in general. I'm here to express our support for Bill 52. I would like to discuss what I believe are some important aspects of the legislation. There are many improvements in the bill that are much needed and long overdue: self-monitoring and rehab-streamline site plans applications.

I would, however, like to begin my presentation by speaking to you about something that is not addressed in Bill 52. My comments relate to the areas of Ontario that are designated under the Aggregate Resources Act and the lack of any expanded designation in Bill 52.

By way of background, the Aggregate Resources Act only applies to certain parts of Ontario. I have a map here that I could show you. This area of southern Ontario is designated and the top part is not designated, except for Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie. Virtually all of southern Ontario — generally areas south of the Canadian Shield — is designated, whereas areas north are not, with the exception of the regional municipality of Sudbury and the city of Sault Ste Marie.

As a result of this arbitrary designation, aggregate producers in northern Ontario often face great difficulties in the marketplace because of the cost associated with operating in areas that are designated versus the reduced cost of operating in areas that are not designated.

In Sudbury we have some operators situated just outside the designated areas that excavate material beside the roadway. They drill and blast, as they feel free, and they are just outside the designated areas. They deliver to the market in Sudbury and have no rehab costs or no licence costs. They don't have to license their properties either.

We strongly believe that a level playing field in terms of legislation and regulation should apply to all aggregate producers, regardless of where they are located.

When you travel to Toronto from Sudbury you will see some operations digging and stockpiling alongside the highway, which makes it an eyesore for tourists and travellers in our province. Especially south of Parry Sound it's very visible; I won't specify exactly where.

We believe, from an environmental viewpoint, the Aggregate Resources Act provides for protection of the social and natural environment and that this level of regulation should apply to the entire province.

We strongly urge that Bill 52 be amended to include the entire province. Our position in support of designating the entire province is one of the few areas where industry, municipalities and a wide range of environmental groups all agree.

The impediment to full designation expressed by a number of governments in the past relates to the financial burden to government from an administrative viewpoint. Many of the proposed changes in Bill 52 eliminate or significantly reduce financial requirements, such as self-monitoring, the rehab security system.

This is an extremely important issue to the aggregate producers in northern Ontario. At a bare minimum, additional designations must be made under Bill 52 to include all areas south of, and including, the Highway 17 corridor from Sault Ste Marie to North Bay.

I would also like to provide the committee with general comments on several other areas of proposed legislation.

We support the general approach of the government in respect to crown aggregates.

We support any changes in legislation that would enhance the protection of crown aggregate resources and enhance the regulation of operation under crown aggregate permits.

We believe that crown aggregate permits should be considered more like licences in terms of both regulation and the extended time frame for commercial operation purposes.

It is often said that many of the regulatory and environmental problems associated with southern Ontario are not always felt as strongly or as severely in northern Ontario. I can assure you that many of the difficulties experienced by aggregate producers in southern Ontario in terms of the current ARA licensing process are also being felt by northern aggregate producers in designated areas.

The time and cost associated with acquiring ARA licences is extreme and increasingly difficult for medium- and small-sized companies to bear. We support any changes in Bill 52 that would streamline the current licensing process while maintaining the ability of the industry to acquire new reserves to meet future demand. We support a process that would focus on provincial standards and standard licence conditions as a way to reduce time and add certainty to the process.

I would also like to express our full support for the proposed ARA trust and changes to the current rehabilitation security system. Aggregate producers in northern Ontario and elsewhere accept that rehabilitation is mandatory and makes good business sense. There are numerous examples of excellent rehabilitation throughout northern Ontario. We believe the establishment of a superfund to guarantee rehabilitation of any licensed site in Ontario is a vast improvement over the current system. The superfund ensures that sufficient dollars are available to undertake rehab for any site where it is required.

Aggregate producers in northern Ontario also support the delivery of the abandoned pit and quarry program by the aggregate producers of Ontario. The abandoned pit and quarry fund has been utilized to rehab abandoned sites in the Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie areas very successfully. We believe the industry can successfully expand the abandoned pit and quarry program and involve municipal, environmental and other partners to ensure that older sites are returned to useful conditions.

I would be happy to answer any questions regarding my comments. Now I'll pass it on to Roy Bertolo from Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Roy Bertolo: Good morning. My name is Roy Bertolo and I'm secretary-treasurer and general manager of Brandes Aggregates Ltd of Sault Ste Marie. I am pleased to have this opportunity to appear before the committee both as a commercial aggregate producer and as a member of the northern committee of the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario.

Brandes Aggregates is a small family-owned business that has produced aggregates for the public and private markets of Sault Ste Marie and area for over 30 years. We are currently employing nine people and have 132 hectares under licence in Sault Ste Marie. We also run permit pits in the White River and Marathon areas. In the 1970s we campaigned actively to ensure that Sault Ste Marie would be designated under the Pits and Quarries Act. We felt the act would help ensure responsible development of our industry.

I am here today to express my strong support for Bill 52. I believe the bill offers significant improvements to the act and reflects the reality of today's business-government relationship. My remarks this morning will focus primarily on self-assessment, as there are several specific sections of the proposed bill that we believe require modification.

As an APAO member and a small aggregate producer in northern Ontario, we have been involved in voluntary self-assessment for our licensed property in 1996. We fully support self-assessment and endorse it as beneficial to both aggregate producers and the public.

I personally was involved in the training program conducted by the APAO and the MNR and I completed the self-assessment report for our property, including remedial measures for areas where non-compliance was identified. I believe there are many benefits to self-assessment for small companies, and without question the program is affordable and within the capabilities of small companies and individuals. With appropriate training, I believe any and all aggregate producers can successfully self-assess their properties without incurring significant expense.

We support the MNR remaining as the enforcement agency in terms of compliance and we support clear and severe penalties for non-completion of self-assessment, falsification, and failure to meet remedial action deadlines. It has been suggested that MNR may not be able to direct the nature of enforcement penalties; however, we believe that licence suspension must be automatic for the issues I have mentioned. I would urge the committee to find a way to enshrine a consistent and mandatory punitive approach in this respect.

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I would like to reinforce and support the comments that have been made by Marcel Ethier in respect to the designation of northern Ontario under the Aggregate Resources Act. Designation is a critical concern for northern operators. The situation arises frequently where a pit or quarry in a designated area is struggling to compete with an operation in close proximity but in a non-designated zone. The playing field is seriously off level.

Producers in northern Ontario also face stiff and unfair competition from the large mining and steelmaking sectors that produce and sell slags as aggregates. These industries produce a significant impact on the environment and the infrastructure, and as of yet are not subject to licensing under the ARA.

Both of these areas represent a potential source of revenue for the province, and with the present amendments to the ARA and the success of the self-monitoring program, the time is right to address these glaring inequities in our industry.

I ask the committee to give these matters serious consideration. I would also like to bring to the committee's attention several issues that we believe require modification or amendment.

First, we support the ability of the minister to refuse a licence based on the applicant's past compliance history. The industry has always been a strong supporter of adding this provision to the ARA to address those situations where companies or individuals have a history of serious non-compliance problems.

As currently proposed, however, Bill 52 may encourage applicants' compliance issues to become the subject of debate at Ontario Municipal Board hearings even if the licence application was not refused by the minister on that basis. Much of the direction of Bill 52 is to shorten the hearings, focus issues and eliminate those issues that can be used as delays or red herrings in a licence application. We strongly urge the committee to add to the bill that applicants' compliance histories should only be before the OMB when the minister has refused a licence application for that reason. This would accomplish the objectives of all concerned in addressing serious offenders, but would safeguard this issue from becoming an additional cost and time delay for responsible operators.

I would also refer the committee to the proposed five-year limitation period for proceedings in respect of an offence under the ARA. The current act calls for a six-month limitation period, which we agree is too short to allow for effective compliance enforcement. Five years, however, is too long. We urge the committee to amend this section to establish a limitation period of two years.

I would like to close by reaffirming our support for the position of the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario in respect of Bill 52.

It has been our pleasure to provide the committee with these comments and the views of northern Ontario aggregate producers regarding Bill 52. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you, gentlemen, for coming down from my part of the world to make your presentation today. One of the concerns I have — and I represent Algoma-Manitoulin, so kind of in between both of you — perhaps you can help me with. I appreciate your comments on the Aggregate Resources Act applying across Ontario, but I'm having some difficulty understanding at least in some way the situation that may occur in unorganized townships.

I have examples in my area where an aggregate producer or an industrial mineral producer — ie, silica — may be producing in an unorganized township but using very little of the road network within the unorgan-

ized township. Probably he built the road himself and it's his road. But then the next municipality, which happens to be organized, has all the trucking go through it. I'm having increased pressure in my area from those municipalities that say, "The government is no longer providing the road maintenance grants they once did and we have no source of revenue to pay for the hardship on our roads that is being produced in an adjacent township where we get no revenue." Is that a problem with your companies?

Mr Ethier: Not really. The four cents or the six cents would be going to the government coffer, and I think that your operators in your area or in your township could turn the road over to the township or —

Mr Michael Brown: But it's an unorganized township.

Mr Ethier: Yes, I understand that, but in unorganized townships there's a different — I don't remember what it's called, but there is a different —

Mr Michael Brown: Without a local roads board; there are no roads in this township.

Mr Ethier: There are no local boards in that area?

Mr Michael Brown: No.

Mr Ethier: I thought since that was their local roads board, they'd turn over the roads to the local roads board and the government pays for part of it.

Mr Michael Brown: That would be given that somebody lives in that township and somebody actually has a road in that township. Neither of those is the case in the ones I'm thinking of.

Ms Martel: Thank you to the two of you for coming to southern Ontario today for this presentation. I want to just go back to the trust fund a little bit, because you talked about expansion of the pits and quarries program, I guess, into the trust fund; maybe I was a bit confused. You also said you would support a multistakeholder presence around that. How do you see that happening? Are you interested in having an advisory board attached to the trust fund so that there can be other influences on how that money is put out, particularly for rehabilitation purposes?

Mr Ethier: You're talking about the trust fund for the rehab?

Ms Martel: Yes.

Mr Ethier: Yes. It would be governed by the APAO. I think it would be done more now than it's been done in the past. For example, there's one in your area that was assigned to be done this summer, and nothing has happened to it. I have it in my office. Right now we just can't seem to get the money for it. It's very small and it's in Capreol township. I think the producers will be more policed on our own, and we'd have to do rehab. There would also be a fair amount of money in the kitty to do rehab that's not being done now. I think now they're only picking the small areas. Last year there was only about \$10,000 spent in the area, which I think could be more.

Ms Martel: Where I'm heading is the presence of other stakeholders when it comes to making decisions about where money is going to go. For example, under the current proposal your organization will have the responsibility to administer the fund. There have been other people who have come forward to suggest that should be broadened to include other folks, either municipalities or people with an environmental background. I'm

wondering what your thoughts are with respect to if they should be involved and how we can involve them in that process.

Mr Ethier: Do you want to answer that, Roy?

Mr Bertolo: As the funds in the trust come from industry and we have a strongly vested interest in getting a good return on the expenditure of those funds, I think the primary responsibility should stay with the industry. Input from other groups is certainly something to be of consideration.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Gentlemen, you heard the previous speaker and I'm sorry he isn't here, but I take great offence to anybody coming into this chamber and suggesting that they cannot trust anybody in your industry. I apologize for your having to listen to that.

My concern, and I'm going to ask you very bluntly, that comment being made from him — I believe you're right; there are some in the industry that possibly aren't reputable people. But do you believe your association can gather all of the operators together and can assist in making sure that the various groups are in compliance with the regulations that will be coming from the ministry as well as the regulations you could put within your association and also the regulations that are imposed by the municipality, ie haul routes, hours of operation etc? Do you feel that you can control this industry to protect the people and the environment?

Mr Ethier: Yes, we can, to answer your question. We are also being policed, or audited, by the MNR, which has inspectors. We went through training with the aggregate producers and MNR on how to do our self-monitoring reports. We found we were stricter with this, because right now they're going for five years — we wish to have two years — to charge you, and they can suspend your licence. On a false report, they can immediately suspend your licence, which they don't have now. If we make a false report — really, we're designed to be stricter now with our reports. Before, we let the MNR hold our hand and put in the reports. If they said, "You've got to cut that tree down," or "Don't cut that tree," we wouldn't do it, and we left it that way. We didn't know where our lot lines were; we assumed they were there. If the inspector put in a report that the lot line was not quite identified, it was only a comment that he would make. Now on our report we have to identify our lot lines. Now I know where all our lot lines are. I didn't know that last year.

So this is my answer to self-policing. I think it's going to be better for the industry, stricter on the industry. This is where, again, I'm playing to a field of we should all be designated, because only some operators have to abide by the law. It's like driving on the highway and saying, "Well, you can't fine me because I'm from northern Ontario," or away from the designated areas. It doesn't make sense.

Mr Stewart: Supervision by your peers. Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate your travelling down today and making your presentation to us.

We have tried to contact Mr Marwick and were unable to do so, so I guess he will not be appearing. We stand recessed until 3:30.

The committee recessed from 1141 to 1532.

The Chair: Good afternoon. Welcome to the members of the ministry staff. I will not introduce you; I will allow you to that yourselves.

Just one housekeeping thing: We would appreciate it if any amendments would be filed with the clerk by noon on Wednesday so that the clerk's office has a chance to go over them and to ascertain their validity and forward copies to everyone.

The basis of the format we've agreed to is a 20-minute presentation by the ministry staff, 15 minutes for the official opposition for questions, 15 minutes for the third party for questions, followed by a 10-minute wrapup by the government members. The floor is yours.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr Ray Pichette: My name is Ray Pichette. I am the manager of the non-renewable resources section, Ministry of Natural Resources. With me today also are staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Brian Messerschmidt is our policy officer for environment and rehabilitation in the aggregates part of the non-renewable resources section. Stuart Thatcher is our senior policy adviser, aggregates, in the non-renewable resources section. Krystine Lintell is senior solicitor for the legal services branch of MNR. Rudy Rybansky is our chief engineer in the non-renewable resources section on the petroleum side of the programs.

I refer the committee to the handout that we've distributed, as it provides in point form the basic highlights of Bill 52 and will form the basis of my presentation before this committee in the allotted time.

I'm afraid that what you're going to hear is a lot of repetition of what you've heard from some of the many excellent presentations before you, and I apologize for that, but we've been asked to give you a technical presentation of the act.

Bill 52 amends basically four pieces of legislation: the Aggregate Resources Act, the Petroleum Resources Act, the Mining Act and the Ontario Energy Board Act. It is effectively structured into four parts, part I being the amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act, part II amendments to the Petroleum Resources Act, part III amendments to other acts and part IV the transition, commencement and short title part.

Focusing on part I, the amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act, in the handout you'll see reference to section numbers. Those are actually section numbers of Bill 52, to make it clear if you need to cross-reference. In the provisions of Bill 52, the ministry is embarking on what we call a standards approach in delivering the aggregate resources program. There's been a lot of discussion with regard to the elimination of listings and direction in the act and effectively transferring those directions into regulations. This is being done for the application requirements and the site plan requirements.

We might add that the primary focus of decision-making on determining whether a licence or a permit is

issued is not under these sections. They are located in other parts of the act. Particularly, section 12 of the Aggregate Resources Act is the fundamental section that deals with the considerations that must be taken into account by the Minister of Natural Resources or the board under Bill 52 in determining whether to issue a licence. That section has not been altered, or anything removed from that section.

There are many benefits that will accrue going to a standards approach. Some in particular are that there will be clear, upfront and comprehensive details with regard to the requirements that proponents must submit to the ministry in order to embark on the application process. It allows us the opportunity to introduce more technical and scientifically based criteria up front, as well as to deal with emerging technology and adapting. We are unable to do that with the provisions that are currently in the act and we've often been challenged in terms of the ambiguity of the listings.

We also have provisions in this act to introduce regulations or what we call standards in the areas of the annual compliance report, and I will speak to the annual compliance report a little later. This will be the manner in which these reports are to be submitted, and the timing and the content.

There's also expansion on enabling provisions in the areas of notification and consultation requirements. The notification requirements in the current act have been repealed under Bill 52 and are to be introduced into regulations. There are no consultation requirements per se in the Aggregate Resources Act, so this is very much an addition that we're contemplating under the regulations.

There's also provision to introduce prescribed conditions. These are conditions that will be automatically applied to operations based on the type of operation they're contemplating. In the end, we find that the process is often very much an argument of what should go on and what shouldn't go on in the form of conditions. There is a whole series of conditions that are very technically based that automatically should apply, so that we can remove the process associated with arguing whether they should be on or not.

Bill 52 adds several additional what we call compliance and deterrence provisions under the aggregate resources portion. Firstly is the compliance partnership or self-assessment, but more appropriately it may be called compliance reporting under sections 15.1 and 40.1 as proposed in Bill 52. This has been interpreted as a self-regulation and self-policing framework for the aggregate industry. It is not so. This effort of the compliance reporting is more in keeping with complementing MNR's efforts in ensuring compliance by operators and does not at all delegate any of the enforcement duties that MNR has. MNR will be in control of all prosecutions and enforcement initiatives.

We have seen through our pilot project of 1994 and the examples of the Aggregate Producers' Association members voluntary compliance with the compliance reporting this year. The benefits we're seeing are really beyond our expectations. I believe for the first time in many years we are seeing sites that are completely and 100% in compliance. So we see major benefits. Again,

it's to complement the efforts of MNR in its inspections and enforcement.

Yes, we have removed the annual inspection requirements of the current Aggregate Resources Act. The reason for that is that we did not want to focus inspectors in terms of the legal requirement, to send them to a site that we know is in compliance to do a full-fledged inspection. We'd rather have the time elements refocused to deal with the non-compliance issues out there that we tend to sometimes miss because we're busy doing the inspections.

1540
An additional thing that's been added in terms of the consideration of whether to issue a licence is the licensee's past history. This is in addition to the considerations. Other than that addition, we have not altered the considerations for the premise of whether a licence should be issued or not.

Under the Provincial Offences Act there is a six-month limitation with regard to prosecutions. That window has been increased to five years under Bill 52. In addition, we've removed the six-month limitation on suspensions so that they do not have to be renewed. They'll be in effect until such time as the operator has corrected the violation or the suspension has been removed.

Under the wayside provision, wayside permits are short-term extractive operations that are used by public authority for public projects. There is provision under wayside permits to allow for delegation to staff of the Ministry of Transportation. The intent here is so that the delegation will be for wayside permits for provincial use only. Again, it's not a delegation to MTO but rather its staff; they become an extension of MNR. Of course, the delegation does not include enforcement; that will be retained by MNR.

Aggregate permits: There's been some consolidation and efficiencies introduced under the aggregate permit regime. Currently there are three types of aggregate permits: personal, public authority and commercial permits. They're all being rolled into one aggregate permit without term. There's also a provision being added that more than one site may be applied to one aggregate permit. We feel this is very easily adaptable to things like the sustainable forest licence under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and will provide certain efficiencies without undermining any of the objectives.

There is also a provision in the legislation for exemption to the aggregate permit; however, still subject to regulations. This is contingent on other pieces of legislation that have resource management plans that effectively meet the same objectives. The purpose is to remove duplication of effort and red tape.

Finally, there is a similar provision for aggregate permits where staff of MTO can become an extension of MNR in the issuance of aggregate permits on crown land for provincial use.

The act allows the minister to establish the aggregate resources trust. During our business analysis of the functions in the aggregate resources program, many items were considered important for their continuance; however, not necessarily required to be delivered by the province. Hence, the creation of the trust and items that

the ministry feels are important but need not be delivered by the direct Ontario public service. These are the financial components of the rehabilitation security. I might add that this change has allowed us to look at that system, its inequities and its shortcomings, and improve on the system.

You've heard the comment of the superfund; we prefer to call it the floating fund. Clearly the old system did cause major concerns and didn't help us meet the objectives of rehabilitating sites where the licences of operators were revoked or they went into bankruptcy. Often when we looked to their accounts there wasn't sufficient money available to do proper rehabilitation. Going to a floating fund account will allow the trust to do that in this case.

Also, the financial management of the abandoned pit and quarry rehabilitation fund will be under the jurisdiction of the trust. The Minister of Natural Resources has made statements both in the Legislature and publicly with regard to the Aggregate Producers' Association actually doing the rehabilitation, but the money management will be with the trust.

In addition, we felt that research should not fall off the table in terms of some of the downsizing going on in MNR, and the provision is with regard to allowing moneys available to research institutions and consultants to do research.

Finally, the fee collection and disbursement: The licence fees that are collected from the operators and disbursed by the municipalities will be accomplished by the trust.

The trust will be established by the minister. A trustee will be appointed by the minister so that there is still a direct accountability to the minister. The trust must report to the minister annually and the minister must table this report in the Legislative Assembly each and every year.

Bill 52 also changes the role of the Ontario Municipal Board. The board will be given the opportunity to rule on objections that are deemed frivolous and vexatious. Currently, that authority is with the Minister of Natural Resources. In addition, the Ontario Municipal Board currently just reports back to the minister with the recommendation. Bill 52 makes that decision of the board binding on the minister whether to issue a licence or not.

In addition, through the referral from the minister of objections and issues to the board, the minister can scope the hearing and that is to simply have items that are outstanding or unresolved dealt with by the board. This, we feel, is a savings to all parties, including the board, applicant, municipality and ratepayers.

Going to part II now, the petroleum and brine sector. One of the important components of this legislation is the definition of the business. The Petroleum Resources Act has often been misinterpreted as dealing with simple things such as gasoline handling or heat pump wells and it was important that this act be focused on its ultimate objective of regulating the following sectors.

We've also done some consolidation of business here in bringing the salt solution mining industry and the hydrocarbon storage industry in salt caverns over to this sector, and I'll explain why.

But clearly Bill 52 in this sector defines the business of being oil and gas exploration and production, storage

of oil and gas and other hydrocarbons in a geological formation, disposal of oil field fluids in a geological formation, salt solution mining — this is where you get your table salt — geological evaluation and testing. The common denominator here is the extraction of subsurface resources or the use of the subsurface for storage. However, the important component of course is the use of and the construction drilling of a well.

Again, this sector is taking a standards approach, but I might add that the petroleum sector internationally has adapted this type of approach for many years and in fact Ontario has adopted the Canadian standard, the CSA Z34193 standard that deals with hydrocarbon storage in underground formations as a regulation. So the changes to Bill 52 are simply just clarification on enabling provisions so that we can ensure that we can adapt standards that are in keeping with the business in Ontario.

In addition, there's a consolidation of business areas and that primarily is of course to introduce many efficiencies and removal of duplication, but "notwithstanding" means that we have to revamp the current regulations so that they can be adopted in those sectors as well.

In the petroleum sector, the bill introduces several compliance and deterrence provisions, in addition to what's already there. Firstly, plugging orders will be allowed to be issued by inspectors. The plugging of a well is probably the most critical part of closure in an oil and gas operation or cavern operation since clearly, if it's done improperly, it will create hazards forever and a day to future generations.

The plugging orders were originally done by the minister under the current Petroleum Resources Act. However, a violation of the plugging order would only involve the seizing of operations and of course the seizing of the liabilities. We want to make the operators more accountable to this and so the front-line inspectors would have the authority to issue plugging orders.

We've also introduced the concept of private sector examiners. These will be examiners certified by MNR, having a specific skill set and knowledge set with regard to examining operations under this legislation. They are not there to replace our inspectors but again to complement our inspections in the form of having the right formula to ensure compliance by all operators. There will be no associated enforcement-related activities by these examiners.

We've also added provisions that inspectors can issue orders for tests and examination. Much of this industry is a bit out of sight, out of mind. Most of the activity is going on in the subsurface. When suspicion of non-compliance is apparent, then the inspectors will have at their disposal the proper tools to seek the operator to do certain tests to determine whether there's compliance.

In addition, the maximum fines have been significantly increased from the level of \$10,000 to \$500,000 and, in addition to that, if there has been any profit realized during the violation, it's added to the fine.

1550

Similarly to the aggregate side, the five-year prosecution window from the current six-month on the Provincial Offences Act has been introduced.

Finally, for the purposes of trying to avoid abandonment of wells without proper accountability, previous well owners will be left liable to ensure also that the wells are properly abandoned and plugged.

In addition, we've introduced enabling authority to bring in financial assurance and liability insurance provisions to operators. Our current system of bonding under the Petroleum Resources Act is very much inadequate, notwithstanding the fact that the dollar requirements are very low. The intent here is of course to transfer the accountability for the financial side to the operators and to make sure that all operators are playing by a level playing field.

Finally, in this area, we've enhanced and updated the appeals of the inspectors' orders.

With the consolidation of the business that we've made under the petroleum and brine sector, we had a review of all the separate instruments that are currently under this sector and found out that quite a few of them were incredibly out of date or really had no specific purpose. As a result, again to introduce efficiencies and reduce duplication, we've consolidated all these instruments into a life cycle well licence, in the sense that it's more of a cradle-to-grave approach control of operations. We feel that many efficiencies as well as better control will be seen through this method.

There's been some discussion with regard to the transfer of the jurisdiction of compulsory pooling and unitization from the Ontario Energy Board to the Mining and Lands Commissioner. Pooling is the joining of oil and gas interests in the production of a well. Both pooling and unitization are terms that are known worldwide in the areas of oil and gas resource management. Unitization is a higher form of pooling in the sense that the entire pool or oil and gas field is managed as a unit. Many efficiencies and economies can be realized by the operators, including being able to introduce production strategies that promote conservation of the resource.

There are, however, situations where certain operators or even land owners refuse to get into these agreements, leaving the rest of the operators in a scenario where they can't proceed, and of course there is the opportunity for adjudication, which currently rests with the Ontario Energy Board. We have found historically that the Ontario Energy Board is a utility regulator and has not had a lot of experience in the resource management side of the equation, even including the energy side.

As a result, we felt that the Mining and Lands Commissioner is a more appropriate adjudicator and tribunal for this purpose. The commissioner has similar roles under the Aggregate Resources Act, the Conservation Authorities Act, the Public Lands Act and of course the Mining Act. In addition, all the references in the Petroleum Resources Act where there were referrals and appeals to the board have now been replaced by the commissioner. However, I might add that the Ontario Energy Board still has jurisdiction on gas storage, and that has remained intact under this legislation.

The Chair: Excuse me, can you wrap this up? The 20 minutes have been used up.

Mr Pichette: Okay, fine.

Finally, the provision of the gas and salt resources trust, again functions that we felt had to continue but need not be continued by the province information management research and laboratory facilities. There has been amendment to the other acts to make sure that the things that are being transferred and the consolidation of business are done appropriately. Finally, there are transition elements to make sure that the old can get to the new.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for appearing this afternoon. I really just want to go through some of this. I didn't quite understand some of the things that were said to us, actually particularly around this petroleum and brine area, which I don't have a great deal of expertise in.

In the commercial aspect of this, pooling and unitization, I gather from the presentations we heard, is something that is favoured by the industry in general. Would that be fair to say?

Mr Pichette: It's a common term. There's a principle called correlative rights. What it is, basically if you have a resource, there is a protection for you for undue drainage of that resource, the resource you own, without proper compensation. The joining of the interest in terms of dealing with not only your allocation of resource, as well as your compensation, is effectively pooling. So it is a normal practice in oil and gas —

Mr Michael Brown: No, I understand that, but the changes you have made, would it generally be said that the industry itself is finding this to be adequate? I think we had at least one presenter who was saying we should even be more proactive in forming these pools etc.

Mr Pichette: The industry is of course very much in favour with us of the transfer of who has the compulsory pooling, simply because they found it too costly and too formal to go before the Ontario Energy Board.

Mr Michael Brown: And too slow.

Mr Pichette: And too slow.

Mr Michael Brown: That was one of the questions I asked actually one of the presenters: Does that in any way take away from the land owner's ability to negotiate? When you make it a little bit more efficient for one side of the equation, often it has the ability of changing the negotiation standard that you work under.

Mr Pichette: No, I don't believe it does. I think it's actually going to improve that component with regard to the informality that may be the commissioner will have in her hearings simply because the land owner might be in a better position to understand what's required, whereas it's not that case right now before the Ontario Energy Board.

Mr Michael Brown: In your view, land owners would stand to benefit as much as the industry does in this?

Mr Pichette: That's right. But I might also add that in a lot of cases this is two separate operators or two separate companies not being able to come to agreement on all the particulars and of course there is that provision for adjudication and help to resolve the dilemma with not being able to come to an agreement.

Mr Michael Brown: There was also an issue raised by one of the presenters, or maybe more than one of the presenters actually, that talked about the liability factor of

where if you had 300 or 400 wells — you're going to have to help me here; I'm just doing most of this from memory — I think we're requiring \$3,500 or \$5,000, I forget the number, and for an operator it just didn't seem logical or reasonable. If you happen to be operating a large number of wells, a smaller amount would be reasonable.

Mr Pichette: Currently, the rate is only \$500.

Mr Michael Brown: And we're increasing that.

1600

Mr Pichette: There's no question that the numbers that are being discussed right now with industry are in the order of \$10,000 to \$15,000 per well. What we're trying to do is also come to an equitable formula by which, if you have 400 or 500 wells, what is your maximum? I think there is that propensity where we get to a level where it becomes more of an impediment to the ability of the operator to operate if so much money is caught up in terms of covering future liabilities. That's what we're discussing right now in developing the regulations.

Mr Michael Brown: I should probably know this, but is it the posting of a bond for that amount of money or is it actually that amount of money you put out?

Mr Pichette: We'll be looking at a number of areas. Some companies are actually interested in dealing with the cash and others are interested in letters of credit. We hope to be flexible, to allow them the type of instrument, as long as there is that financial guarantee.

Mr Michael Brown: You're looking for some assurance, but it's negotiable as —

Mr Pichette: That's right. The manner in which the security is put in place will be really subject to the individual operators.

Mr Michael Brown: Is there any difference between the liability that might accrue to a well on land versus one that may be actually in the lake? I don't know that we have any. I presume we do.

Mr Pichette: Yes, we do. We have about 630 wells in Lake Erie.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm a Lambton boy. I just know about —

Mr Pichette: In addition to the bonding requirements that we will have right across the board for all wells, under our lease agreements with Lake Erie operators, there is \$1 million worth of liability insurance with the operators there.

Mr Michael Brown: So there's additional insurance if you're in —

Mr Pichette: Yes. Right now it's to protect the crown from liability in terms of inheriting the liability. That is through the lease agreement we have with the operators, not through the legislation. That's separate from the legislation. Even though Bill 52 adds the enabling authority to have liability insurance right across the board, we have had that with operators on the lake through the leases they have from us.

Mr Michael Brown: Is it all natural gas that's in the lake?

Mr Pichette: That's right. There's no oil. There's no liquid recovery; it's strictly gas.

Mr Michael Brown: On the aggregate side, we've heard some discussion about extending the aggregate act, and in terms of the area that is designated, there's some talk that relatively minor increases may solve the majority of the problem. I'm thinking about enforcement across 90% of the land mass, which is northern Ontario, which is basically exempt, but there are certain areas, as we heard from two gentlemen this morning, that are experiencing particular problems. I think one of them is in Ms Martel's riding. Do we have any sense of how much larger some of these regions would have to be to accommodate the problem, or do you just push the problem of one more township as you go?

Mr Pichette: Designation historically has been incremental. If you saw that map, that grey area wasn't done overnight; it was done over a period of 21 years — 22 years, actually. There are areas that we know and we are aware of where there are inequities in terms of non-provincially regulated operations that are feeding a regulated market. The decision of further designation would rest, of course, with the Minister of Natural Resources. It has long been the staff's position that all significant parts of the province should be designated. It is more of a fiscal issue than it is an issue of policy.

Mr Michael Brown: One of the things I found surprising in Bill 26 was that it precluded municipalities from charging an operator directly for using the roadways any kind of a royalty. It's actually spelled out that whether you're hauling logs or you're hauling aggregate, whatever you're hauling, they can't charge.

I didn't perhaps explain it very well this morning, but I'm having some difficulty in my constituency where, out of unorganized areas, operators are hauling across organized areas to get where they're going. I think maybe you understood the conversation I was having this morning in regard to, is there any thought in the ministry to find a way that those very rural townships can find some kind of revenue base to make up for the wear and tear on these roads?

Mr Pichette: For operations in designated parts of the province, there of course is the licence fee. This fee is currently six cents a ton, and a portion of that fee is reimbursed to the municipalities, both upper and lower tier.

Mr Michael Brown: I understand that.

Mr Pichette: That is meant to be compensation for the impact within the municipality where the extraction has occurred. We have situations where the transportation is right on to a king's highway, and no impact accrues to the municipality from the extraction in terms of road damage. Notwithstanding, the policy had to be placed some place and it was really with regard to the local extraction and impact.

The difficulty in dealing with that fee is that it is not a level playing field out in the province right now. That is really the only form of compensation right now from the industry.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm just suggesting that in some of the townships I'm thinking of, the aggregate is actually not in their township — it is, say, slightly to the north — and there are no roads in the township that the aggregate is being taken from. The mining or the aggregate

company would have made their own road on crown land and would have just then come to an organized municipality, which is probably very close and has a road. They get absolutely no revenue from this. The difficulty is, I used to be able to say, "Well, 80% of your roads grant was paid by the province." That works; it made some sense to them. But now that there is no funding for roads, it's all lumped into an unconditional grant, you should try to go and explain this to them.

Mr Pichette: You're talking about aggregate permits on crown land. Their source of material is going into organized municipalities or even hamlets.

Mr Michael Brown: Going across them, not really into them.

Mr Pichette: The only compensation is through royalties to the crown and application fees and permit fees. There is nothing going to the local level. Of course a big policy question is, how much? I mean, everybody is using roads. I'm really not in a position to give any sort of concept or opinions in that area.

Mr Michael Brown: Oh, I understand. I just wondered if there was thought being given to those issues, because frankly I think it's not so much you, but the forest industry's going to be involved in a lot of these problems very shortly.

Mr Pichette: If I may, I think there's more thought in terms of making sure there is a level playing field among aggregate operators than dealing with different situations that might occur in different parts of the province.

Mr Michael Brown: Is there any change being contemplated at all, through regulation or otherwise, to the definition of "aggregate"?

Mr Pichette: There is a provision in the current Aggregate Resources Act that allows us to exclude certain commodities from the definition of "aggregate." The Aggregate Resources Act has to work with the Mining Act, which has the industrial minerals component, and there are scenarios where it's probably best to deal with that particular commodity specifically in the industrial minerals sectors under the Mining Act and the closure plans. There is that provision, so there are a number of commodities right now that have been exempted through the definition. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Just one question: With respect to regulations and requirements, if we were to turn over everything to the private sector, do you think this level playing field would be much smoother than it is now?

Mr Pichette: I guess I'd have to ask the question, in terms of giving everything over to the private sector, what is meant by that?

Mr Sergio: A self-regulatory body.

Mr Pichette: I guess it is MNR's position that the industry needs to be regulated, and I would argue that what we have presented here is not self-regulation. It is certainly a transfer of more accountability to the industry, a devolution of functions that we do not feel the province needs to perform, but never the less its focus is very much in standards development, licensing and permitting and enforcement. From that perspective, that's what Bill 52 is attempting to accomplish.

Mr Sergio: You said it is not a level playing field now. What kind of change would you like to see to improve it?

Mr Pichette: I would say that the level playing field at this point in time is because of the designation. It is not an issue of Bill 52. The provisions to designate have not been altered or changed whatsoever under the current Aggregate Resources Act. That is something very separate from Bill 52.

Ms Martel: Thank you for the presentation. Let me just follow up on that particular point and ask the question: Has the ministry estimated the cost that an individual operator might incur to go from being undesignated now to being designated? I assume that's what the financial concern is when you talk about finances.

Mr Pichette: That's a very difficult question. We were trying to look at that back in the early 1990s, and we actually had a rough figure of about 15 to 19 cents per ton, but the aggregate industry is a local industry because of the transportation costs, so it's very difficult to say provincially that that's a good figure.

Ms Martel: And that's what the costs would be. Let me just move through some of the comments that you've made, because I've outlined some questions. You talked about the site plan requirements and how much of that section will move into regulation. One thing I was curious about is that before, when there was a site plan amendment that was being proposed, I understood it was mandatory that a clerk of an adjacent regional municipality or county etc would get notification. Now the change that I see seems to be that the notification comes at the minister's discretion. Why would we have that change? Notification of all of these kinds of things I think would be particularly important to adjacent municipalities.

Mr Pichette: I believe the current act allows for discretion for the service of notice to the municipality, so we really haven't changed anything in that area that I'm aware of.

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Ms Martel: That was not my understanding. Can I just —

Mr Pichette: If you refer to section 20 of the Aggregate Resources Act — that is, if you have the Aggregate Resources Act.

Ms Martel: Hang on, I've got it, yes. The section I'm referring to is on page 16 of the old bill. Under section 16, my read of the changes around amendment of site plans is that, at the bottom, "The minister may, at any time, require a licensee to amend" it, and "A licensee and any municipality served with notice" under that clause "may provide the minister with comments within 30 days" — unless I'm reading it wrong. It's not a huge point. Maybe I can add that to my other concerns about notification, because you said a lot of the consultation requirements are not in the bill now and they are going to be added in strengthening the bill.

The problem I have is, you didn't say anything about notification, because what I see in the bill, and I've raised this a couple of times, is that again and again where there are notifications to people in unorganized communities, for example, notifications to municipal people, whether it be with site plan amendments etc, all of those are being

moved into regulation and I don't understand why that's happening. It's important to give people public notice about these changes. These issues can be very controversial.

By and large we heard that municipalities have a good relationship with the majority of their companies and I'm confused why now we would be taking what I perceive to be a backward step with respect to letting people know what's going on and allowing them to have the opportunity to participate. Maybe that's not a fair question to ask you; maybe I should be talking to the minister about that when he comes next week. But I've seen that time and time again in the changes and I'm really perplexed why we would think that's an appropriate thing to do, especially these days.

Mr Pichette: The current notification requirements in the act cannot be altered whatsoever or added upon, and one of our intentions here by moving this to regulations is to add on to the notification requirements, particularly the consultation side of the equation. Of course, there is nothing in the act to that effect other than service. At this point in time, my office, in terms of trying to draft the regulations, is putting requirements in for open houses and public meetings. We can't do that under the current act.

Ms Martel: Is that for unorganized and organized communities, or just unorganized?

Mr Pichette: The reason the unorganized community component of the current Aggregate Resources Act was removed is because we're moving everything into the regulations. It becomes redundant to have that sticking out there when all the rules will be under regulations.

Ms Martel: Sorry, my reference was whether you're going to have open houses for both communities, because they're different processes to notify two.

Mr Pichette: This is strictly at the staff level at this point in time. I can't really speak for the Minister of Natural Resources, but it will be a recommendation that we are going to make.

Ms Martel: All right. If I could get some guarantee that the provisions would be strengthened and not lessened, I would probably feel better. I also think that if they're in the act, it just has a much clearer and stronger force in law as well.

Mr Pichette: We are not intending to at all weaken those notification procedures.

Ms Martel: If I flip to the next page, when you talk about, at the bottom, the limitation on suspensions, I agree with that section. Correct me if I'm wrong: In the act now there will be no annual renewal of a permit. Why is that change being made?

Mr Pichette: Efficiencies. We find that a major part of our cost is dealing with renewals, as well as being a major impediment to the industry in terms of rationalizing their need for crown aggregate. There will still be an annual fee. There will be a compliance report, which the aggregate permittees didn't have before. There was no form of inspections or requirement for inspections. In lieu, in terms of that added cost, is that you won't have to make that application every year to get the permit renewed. There are sufficient provisions in the act to

either suspend or revoke the permits if there is not compliance.

Ms Martel: Maybe I should reference another act and say that even under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act you would have to do a number of things in renewals at five-, 10-, 20-year periods, but most of those contracts would not be carried on in perpetuity. I'm curious why in a resource that still belongs to the public we would have what I think is — I could be wrong — quite a different set of rules being set in place here.

Mr Pichette: I don't think the principle of perpetuity is really what we're expecting here. It's again, I think, more of the ability to introduce efficiencies on the administrative side of dealing with aggregate permits, but also providing the opportunity for operations out there to significantly invest in proper aggregate operations, knowing very well that they are a going concern, because at this point in time every year there's a question of whether they're going to get renewed and whether they're going to have to argue with MNR through appeal mechanisms. So again, there's a benefit to the industry side. I think in the end we'll end up with far more mature operations out there as a result.

Ms Martel: Let me ask about the trust. How far along has the ministry got in terms of its discussion with the association about how this is going to be structured? I've listened to various presenters express concerns about there being some outside influence, either by municipalities or environmental groups, into how some of these decisions are made about rehabilitation. Maybe that's an unfair question because I don't know how far down the road you are in determining this.

Mr Pichette: We actually aren't that very far, unfortunately. I wish we were farther. We've had just generally internally, in terms of what we see as the trust, in terms of a business plan, a decision-making body, dealing with the functionality that we expected to deal with and we've had some preliminary discussions with aggregate producers for their thoughts, but that's about as far as we've gone so far.

Ms Martel: The trust that's in place under the mining side I think continues to be administered within the public sector domain. I'm curious why we are moving from that to the private sector now, because the mining industry does not have administrative responsibility for rehabilitation matters.

Mr Pichette: There's no question that this bill has an Ontario public service downsizing component, so items that we felt need not continue with the province would be somewhat transferred to private sector organizations. That's predominantly the reason. In addition, based on the functionality we expect from the trust, there will probably be far more efficiencies in dealing with the functions than would happen within the Ontario public service. So we think there'd be better service to the industry and the public at large.

Ms Martel: My former employees at the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines might not agree with you on that one. Is that the same reason there is also a change around who can be designated as an inspector? I know we had this discussion I think in Niagara Falls and I am still confused as to the change-around on page 2 of

the new bill, subsection 4(1), where it talks about, "The minister may designate in writing any person as an inspector for the purposes of this act." What is that reference to?

Mr Pichette: It's speaking to the removal of the employee of the ministry. That's what we removed in that section. Our intent here is — we're maybe having a little bit of foresight here in terms of government potentially restructuring — the opportunity to appoint other ministries' staff as inspectors. A good example would be environmental officers. Under the current legislation the inspector had to be a ministry employee, couldn't be a Ministry of Environment and Energy employee.

Ms Martel: But my read of this would also allow anyone to go beyond the public sector. There's no limitation here that the employee has to be an employee of another ministry or indeed MNR.

Mr Pichette: It's not the intent. It's just to introduce the potential ability to appoint other ministries' staff.

Ms Martel: Will you be bringing forward an amendment to clarify that, because my read of it now is it leaves it wide open to anyone in the private sector too. If that's not the intent —

Mr Pichette: I think you'd have to refer that to the committee, to Mr Klees.

Ms Martel: I'll leave that with you. I don't think it's clear, and I think we had that discussion in Niagara Falls.

Let me ask you as well about the references to the Ontario Municipal Board. I'm not clear why we'd be giving the minister the power to refer or to scope and to decide what would be referred to a hearing. My sense of it, and correct me if I'm wrong, would be you're going to end up at a hearing probably because of a ministerial decision. So why are you letting the same person who might have made a negative decision then have the authority to scope what is actually heard at the OMB? Am I reading that wrong?

Mr Pichette: No, only the minister can refer to the board. Basically the process that's being contemplated under Bill 52 is a proponent-driven process — accountability on the proponent to try and resolve all objections. If the objections can't be resolved, the minister can refer the matter to the board for a decision. The intent here is that if there are only a few outstanding objections, by virtue of the minister's direction, should he or she choose, the board can just simply focus on those outstanding objections. It doesn't have to go to a complete, full-fledged, de novo type of hearing to start afresh on everything. Only the minister can refer to the board.

1620

Ms Martel: What if a proponent cannot get a licence because the minister has denied that licence? There is no access then for that proponent now under the changes to ask to have that referred to the OMB?

Mr Pichette: That's an appeal to the board. That's not a referral, it's an appeal to the board.

Ms Martel: Are there two different circumstances wherein the minister can scope in one case and not in the other?

Mr Pichette: Yes, that's correct. Are you clear on that?

Ms Martel: No. If you were going to add something I'd appreciate it just to clarify this.

Ms Krystine Lintell: It's basically two different processes. Where we're dealing with the application for a licence, the referral to the board is to resolve the unresolved objections. The scoping is in order to focus the board's attention on only those objections and not to extend the hearing to a consideration of issues that have already been dealt with satisfactorily. Where an applicant is denied a licence, there are no limitations. It's the applicant's right to appeal to the board and it does not go through the minister or in any way involve a referral of the minister.

Ms Martel: Let me follow up on a point I think my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin was raising, and that had to do with the financial assurance, because we heard from a number of persons who were concerned about how they would be able to financially themselves be in line with the requirements that the ministry was going to make. We had the same dilemma when we tried to deal with financial assurance for several of the major mining companies in the province, not so much because they had extensive mining operations but because the cost attached to rehabilitation of any one of their single operations was in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

I wonder if you've had a chance to talk to the staff on that side of the operation about how that was dealt with? There were very similar concerns raised by Inco and Falconbridge at the time we made those requirements as well. Can what they put in place there be applied here?

Mr Pichette: We're talking about very separate, very distinct, different industries here from a perspective of setting up financial assurance. If I recall the Mining Act, most of it's upfront moneys of a magnitude far more than you'll ever see in the oil and gas exploration industry.

The objective here is twofold in developing any form of financial assurance. One is to provide an encouragement for any operator to properly abandon their operations in a manner that will not contribute environmental hazards for the future, and by doing so there's a financial incentive to get their money back, that they have an assurance. The other objective is to have that money should the operator default so that the crown can recoup that money and come in and do the work for them.

On a per-well basis in Ontario, again we're having fairly extensive discussions with the industry on what is equitable here. It is not our intent to put any of the operators in a financial bind, but it's clear that we do want some form of assurance so that wells are properly plugged in the future. It's becoming a bit of a negotiation, but we're sort of holding firm on some fairly significant increases in this area, and so far they're very amenable to it. It's just a matter that I think we are going to introduce a maximum level so that isn't an impediment to future investment in the province.

Mr Klees: Thank you to you and your colleagues for such a precise précis of this bill. I'm glad that Mr Brown now in very short order has become an expert on oil, gas and brine. I'd like you to please comment on the transition to the standards-based regulatory system that really this bill is effecting. Could you comment, first, on the reason for the standards-based system and second, what

effect do you feel that's going to have on the industry and the relationship of the ministry to the industry?

Mr Pichette: When we were designing the standards-based approach — and it's not without a degree of precedent, as I mentioned; the petroleum sector has been doing this for some time on an international level. There are many benefits. Of course, we've had six years of experience in delivering the Aggregate Resources Act right now and we have found that the current listings under, I believe, sections 8 and 9 of the current act provide much ambiguity to both the industry and of course ratepayers and municipalities.

By going to a more comprehensive and clear format in standards not written in legalese, we feel that these rules can be more up front and have specific direction that will allow the industry particularly to have more improved business decisions. I think it's very important, if you look at the current listings under the Aggregate Resources Act, that the standards approach allows us to bring in more technical and scientific-based criteria and requirements so that we are more specific and there's more tangibility with regard to the industry and what they must provide. There's of course a flexibility in being able to be dynamic with regard to emerging technology, and this is very apparent in the oil business, where we're getting into horizontal well drilling. It removes a lot of uncertainties in the process.

One of the biggest examples we have right now is that, under section 9, an operator must consider water quantity and water quality, but nowhere in the piece of legislation or the regulations is there a requirement for hydro-geological study of a certain magnitude. It is the intent to have that kind of detail and requirements in terms of the scientific research requirements up front and mandatory by the applicants. There's an opportunity to remove much red tape and duplication with other ministries by going to a standards-based approach.

It also provides an opportunity for more accountability with the industry, and this might again, in terms of your second question, deal with providing, hopefully, that maturity over time with the industry so that they become more accountable for their actions, better business decisions. It also avoids having our ministry issue what we call non-enforceable policy and program direction documents that really, when you are challenged legally, have no full force or effect of law.

Going to a standards-based approach, the upfront, clear approach will put us in proper stead in terms of being challenged by applicants. I think that will reflect on the industry as well as the ratepayers and the municipalities, because hopefully this will be laid out in plain English from a perspective that everybody will understand the process. That's our intent.

1630

Mr Klees: I'll just follow up on one other item that's obviously of concern, and rightfully so. We're making a transition here in terms of how business is being conducted. One of the concerns that has been expressed by Ms Martel, I know, on a number of occasions is that by moving to the self-assessment and placing significantly more responsibility on the industry, and even though I have repeatedly made the statement that we're refocusing

the functions of our inspectors, which will allow them to spend much more time at the function of inspection, the concern is still there that, given the restructuring of the ministry, will there in fact be sufficient staffing available to make this new system work? I'd be interested in your comments on that.

Mr Pichette: There's no question that the ministry has every intent to allocate sufficient dollars to deliver on Bill 52 and the existing legislation. We believe with the refocusing of the inspection and enforcement component of our inspectors and removing many of the administrative financial functions that they've done will actually see an improvement in terms of our field presence, and an improvement in our focus dealing with non-compliance operators.

Mr Klees: Would you comment briefly on the effectiveness of the inspections that have taken place over the last number of years under the system as it is right now. Has it been an effective method of inspection? What percentage of sites in the province has been inspected on a regular basis?

Mr Pichette: There is certainly a degree of effectiveness when an inspector does a full inspection on a site. Unfortunately, with the fiscal realities of today, we are not meeting that objective 100%. Some areas are; some areas are not. The difficulty we see is that by sending an inspector to a site that is in full compliance or substantial compliance with legislation, regulations, site plans and conditions, and not to see a compliance issue result from full inspections, which can take anywhere from a day to two days, we feel that there isn't a real return on the investment in terms of dealing with the broader non-compliance component of the industry. Does that answer your question to some degree?

Mr Klees: Let me ask you to be more specific. Of the total number of sites that we have in the province right now, what percentage of those sites would be current in terms of the regulatory requirements and how many of them would have been inspected within the last year, or what percentage of them?

Mr Pichette: We haven't got statistics for the last year.

Mr Klees: How about the last four years?

Mr Pichette: I would repeat myself in saying that we have some areas that have accomplished 100% inspection and other areas that have been as low as 50% and maybe even lower than that based on the statistics we've seen.

Mr Klees: One last point on the rehabilitation issue: My understanding of the system as it's working right now, we've got — what? — \$60 million in that fund, but my understanding is that all of those dollars are targeted to specific sites. While there may be \$60 million there, it may well be that a particular site is in need of rehabilitation and the cost for that might be \$50,000 but there may only be \$2,000 set aside for that particular site. As a result, we have a very real situation that the rehabilitation can't really be done effectively. Under the new system with the pooling that won't be happening. In other words, we'll actually be in a situation where, when rehabilitation needs to take place, the moneys will flow to the source of need. Is that correct?

Mr Pichette: Yes. In fact I'd go so far as making the statement that in most of the revocations and bankruptcies, when we go and open up the account there are insufficient dollars to do anything and as a result very little money from the fund has been used in history and that's one of the reasons it's so high. Going to the floating fund will allow the trust of course to access dollars to rehabilitate those sites where we can't right now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Pichette and all staff members. We appreciate you coming here today.

Mr Michael Brown: Is there an opportunity to ask a couple of quick clarification questions?

The Chair: Sure, if nobody has any objection to that.

Mr Michael Brown: Just with the penalty part of the bill, if you are not in compliance, it's an automatic suspension. Do I understand that?

Mr Pichette: No. It has to be an action by the ministry to suspend. There is no such thing as an automatic suspension. If for some reason you've broken the law, you're automatically suspended, must close your gate. An inspector has to issue any suspension notice.

Mr Michael Brown: Okay. Let's say the inspector issues a suspension notice because you're not in compliance and then you bring yourself into compliance within — I don't know — whatever period of time. Having been around bureaucracies for a while, what assurance does the operator have that the licence would be reinstated in a timely fashion once he's back in compliance?

Mr Pichette: If you correct the violation, the suspension automatically removes itself.

Mr Michael Brown: That's the theory, but —

Mr Pichette: Yes. Always subject to interpretation, I imagine, between the operator and the inspector, but that's the way it's currently built in the Aggregate Resources Act.

Mr Michael Brown: There's no time line associated with —

Mr Pichette: No. It doesn't necessarily have to be officially lifted. If there has been compliance with the suspension, you can open up the gates and continue activities.

Mr Michael Brown: Oh, I see. So if you are back in compliance then you can start operating even if the inspector has not come out to verify you're back in compliance.

Mr Pichette: That's it.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We do appreciate your giving us some of your time this afternoon.

Any other items of business for the committee to consider?

Mr Klees: I had asked staff to prepare parallel summaries of the act which I thought might be helpful to members of the committee. They're available now if members of the committee would like them. They basically show the existing act and the parallel changes to it. So if you would like those, the Clerk can distribute them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Klees. There being no further business, we stand adjourned until next Thursday, October 17, at 10:00 am.

The committee adjourned at 1637.

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**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West / -Ouest PC) for Mr Tascona

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin L) for Mr Grandmaître

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie PC) for Mr Hardeman

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South / -Sud PC) for Mr Danford

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain PC) for Mr Young

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East / -Est ND)

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Tonia Grannum

Staff / Personnel: Mr Jerry Richmond, research officers, Legislative Research Service

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Jeudi 17 octobre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Aggregate and
Petroleum Resources
Statute Law
Amendment Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 modifiant des lois
en ce qui concerne
les ressources en agrégats
et les richesses pétrolières



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 17 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 17 octobre 1996

*The committee met at 1003 in committee room 1.*AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS
ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Consideration of Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning. Welcome to the beginning of clause-by-clause discussion of Bill 52. We have, as agreed, the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr Hodgson, with us this morning for a 15-minute presentation. That's what we asked for and that's what he committed to. Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): I'd like to thank the committee members for their time in working on this bill. With the recent changes to the remuneration, I felt I should extend our appreciation to all parties for their time on this.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to appear before this committee to comment on Bill 52. This bill, once passed, will amend four existing statutes: the Aggregate Resources Act, the Petroleum Resources Act, the Mining Act and the Ontario Energy Board Act.

I know that you've listened to a number of briefs, and our staff have spent time before this committee, but I think it's important that I outline a few of the things I think are important.

The bill will improve the way the government regulates the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries in the province. The amendments proposed in the bill will eliminate red tape, introduce efficiencies, remove barriers to private sector job creation and streamline delivery. It will also help the ministry to maintain the province's leadership in regulating the industries and improve our enforcement capability to ensure regulatory compliance. Both the environment and the economy will benefit from this initiative, and this is very much our objective in the design of this bill.

This proposed legislation is consistent with our decision to clearly define ministry and industry roles. The ministry will concentrate on its core business of developing policy and standards, enforcing those standards and providing technical approvals for permits and licences. Industry will be more accountable for its actions and day-to-day operations. Industry will become more aware of provincial environmental standards and clearly be penalized for failure to meet these standards.

The current legislation can be too complex and ambiguous, with often too much process. There are many administrative and financial functions that ministry inspectors must now perform which are either not necessary or better performed by another party. This bill will address these issues and allow inspectors to focus on the ministry's core business of enforcement and compliance with ministry standards.

The bill proposes a compliance partnership. Through it, industries will have a role in monitoring their day-to-day activities and reporting annually to the ministry. As a result, it will strengthen compliance. The bill does not provide a framework for industries to be self-regulating and self-policing, as some have suggested.

The introduction of the compliance report has many benefits. Operators will be aware of the rules and must measure their performance against the rules. This compliance report will be open to the public and will increase accountability to encourage operators to do the right thing.

MNR will retain responsibility for ensuring delivery, particularly with regard to inspections. Under this legislation, the duties and powers of an inspector remain unchanged. We will continue to do inspections and audits of sites. Ensuring compliance is a major priority in this program area.

Bill 52 proposes important changes to each of the affected industries. I would like to begin by outlining some of the changes to the aggregates program. I will then turn my attention to the petroleum and brine industries.

The operational standards being developed for the aggregates industry will provide detailed, upfront, technical guidelines and criteria in simple-to-read language which will be clearer than the current act and regulations. MNR intends to develop the first draft and to seek comments from industry and other key stakeholders prior to finalizing the regulations. In addition, we will formally post the proposed regulations on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry, allowing us to reach a much broader audience.

As part of this effort to provide greater clarity and detail, changes will also be made to the aggregate licence

application process. Potential applicants will be given a set of stringent standards right at the start to guide them through the application process. MNR will be responsible for reviewing the application to ensure that all standards have been met. It will be the applicant's responsibility to resolve all issues and objections that are raised. As a result, the public, municipalities and other stakeholders will have the ability to convey concerns and objections under this new application process directly to the applicant.

There will still be cases where the applicant is unable to resolve concerns, so the Minister of Natural Resources may refer matters to the Ontario Municipal Board. The board will have new decision-making authority under this bill rather than being limited to making recommendations to the minister, as is now the case. This will give additional credibility and respect to the process. Parties to the hearings will clearly have to work together to resolve any objections.

The Aggregate Resources Act presently provides for three types of aggregate permits: commercial, public authority and personal permits. Bill 52 will simplify and reduce regulatory confusion by consolidating them into a single aggregate permit.

There is also provision for multisite permits and exemption to permits. These were introduced primarily for the forestry sector and will facilitate the extraction of aggregate for the construction and maintenance of forest access roads. With the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, many efficiencies can be used to help remove red tape and duplication in the area of aggregate extraction for forest access roads. In the end, however, the forest industry will still have to comply with the operational standards, and compliance reporting will be subject to auditing and enforcement by MNR inspectors.

1010

The aggregate resources trust is an innovative way of dealing with a function that must continue but that need not be delivered by the province. A public trustee will look after all financial transactions involving the funds. The trust will collect and disburse annual licence fees, administer the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund, and administer a new pooled trust fund to provide for rehabilitation where aggregate permits and licences have been revoked or operators have gone into bankruptcy.

The Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario will be responsible for the delivery of the rehabilitation program associated with the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund. It makes sense; it is part of their business. It gives them responsibility both physically and financially for rehabilitating these sites. For your information, MNR currently has an agreement in place with the association for the delivery of the program for the fiscal year 1996-97.

Let me now turn to the petroleum and brine industries. As with the provisions related to aggregates, Bill 52 will change operational standards for petroleum and brine and base them on detailed technical guidelines. These will be similar to the current Canadian Standards Association standard for hydrocarbon storage.

MNR will continue to conduct field inspections of wells and other facilities, with strengthened powers. For example, inspectors will have the authority to order plugging of wells. On a related note, the ministry has introduced the concept of industry-based examiners who will be certified by the MNR. I would point out that these new industry-based examiners will complement, not replace, our current ability to ensure compliance with standards. The number of examiners will be determined by the marketplace.

The bill also introduces additional deterrence factors. There will be a significant increase in the possible fines, with a new maximum of \$500,000 replacing the current maximum of \$10,000. The time period for initiating prosecutions will be extended to five years. The ministry also anticipates increased vigilance on the part of the public, industry and other stakeholders in reporting suspected illegal operations.

Bill 52 will lead to the implementation of a new life-cycle well licence to replace the current well permit system, which only addresses the regulatory functions associated with drilling and many other activities. The new system requires adherence to operational standards for the entire life of the well, right from the initial well drilling to the final plugging and abandonment.

The life-cycle well licence will cover all activities, including drilling, production, maintenance and changes in the status or purpose of the well. In addition, it eliminates other licences and approvals, such as annual production and rig licences, as well as special brine well permits under the Mining Act.

The oil, gas and salt resources trust is very similar in concept to the aggregate resources trust. This trust will support the geological core and chip library managed by the ministry and thereby ensure the continued provision of this information and research service to the industry and academic institutions. It will also fund progressive applied research in the fields of oil, natural gas, salt solution mining and hydrocarbon storage. The fund will be administered by a board of directors and should raise about \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually, according to ministry estimates.

The bill improves the regulations regarding compulsory pooling and unitization. Compulsory pooling and unitization in the petroleum and gas industry is currently regulated by the Ontario Energy Board. However, the board deals primarily with utilities, and hearings before the board can be very costly. Bill 52 transfers this regulatory role to the Mining and Lands Commissioner, an official who is responsible to the Minister of Natural Resources and who deals with many resource decisions.

I would like to speak about implementation. There is no question that the passage of this bill will allow the ministry to introduce many efficiencies in delivering programs. The efficiencies introduced will allow the ministry to properly deliver its non-renewable resources program in a downsizing environment. The focus on its core business — standards development, technical approvals and, most importantly, enforcement — provides us with this opportunity.

I would also like address the issue of regulations. There's been much criticism of the fact that the ministry

has not released the draft regulations. There is no intent here to weaken our current legislation or regulations. I believe the opposite will be true: The standards will be tougher in our new program. Staff have been making every effort to develop the first draft so that meaningful consultation can occur. The first draft is scheduled to be completed some time late in November and will be circulated to stakeholders and interest groups for comments. I will also circulate it to opposite parties, and as I mentioned, we'll post it on the EBR.

In closing, the government will be introducing a number of motions to amend the bill currently before this committee. I believe you have already received copies of our motions. Though they are very much of a house-keeping nature, there are some that we feel address the concerns that have been raised in the presentations before this committee and in written submissions.

I believe that Bill 52 is an innovative approach that introduces efficiencies and allows for effective delivery of these programs. As mentioned earlier, the approach we are taking addresses both the economic and environmental perspectives. A true balance, I believe, Mr Chair and committee members, has been found with this bill. I would like to thank you for allowing me to appear here today and for your time in studying this.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. We appreciate your attendance here this morning.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Mr Chair, I wonder if I might ask the minister if he would have some time for questions.

The Chair: Basically, the agreement we made was that he would be here about 15 minutes for presentation; he's left another meeting to be here, so he's not obligated to stay beyond that time.

Hon Mr Hodgson: What's the question, Shelley?

Ms Martel: Actually, I had a couple. I'll try and work through them quickly. I noticed that you said you're going to post the reg changes on the environmental registry and I was curious as to why the bill itself hadn't been posted on the registry, because I know you came in for some criticism from the Environmental Commissioner with respect to that very issue. Is there a reason the ministry didn't post it in the first place?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll let Ray answer that. Legally, we don't have to.

Mr Ray Pichette: If I may, initially, of course, we were under the regulatory exemption with regard to posting, but it is of course a discretionary matter of the minister and it was felt that with the consultation that's going through with this committee we were still meeting the objectives of the Environmental Bill of Rights. There will be a notice of exception filed at some point, probably in November or December.

Ms Martel: Can I ask one other question about the inspectors, because this has been a point that I've raised a couple of times. Your parliamentary assistant was good enough to get back to us with the staffing implications with respect to the inspectors for 1996-97 and his information indicated that we were moving from 41 to 32. Why I'm asking this again is because we all received a two-page letter from the MNR inspectors themselves and their numbers were quite a bit different. They said, and

I'm just quoting from their letter, "With the proposed number of inspectors reduced to 16 for private land designated areas, each inspector will have limited time available for carrying out enforcement duties and auditing." I'm wondering if I'm reading this wrong, if the numbers are correct, why there is a discrepancy or does it have something to do with a distinction between private and public land?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Just in general, their function is going to be changed slightly. They're no longer going to be doing the banker's role or a lot of the administrative functions that can be done by others. The industry in particular is going to be managing this or the trust. They'll have more time to do what they're supposed to be doing in what the core business of the ministry is.

On the actual numbers debate, I can let Ray talk to you about that. But I believe Frank, my parliamentary assistant, handed you a graph that outlines it.

Ms Martel: Yes, he did.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I've read the Hansard from the last time Ray was here. Do you want to follow up on that?

Mr Pichette: Are you suggesting there are only 16 aggregate resource officers this year?

Ms Martel: No. I was referencing a September 13, 1996, document that was given to this committee on behalf of the aggregate officers' association of Ontario, who I assume are the MNR staff that are involved in inspections. Under the section, "Annual Compliance Report," their quote is the following: "With the proposed number of inspectors reduced to 16." Now I'm assuming that's what the end number is. In the document that was given to us by the parliamentary assistant, we only had the numbers for this year, not next year, and I know there's a second year of MNR cuts coming and I'm wondering what number is actually the one that we should be considering will be the end number of inspectors in the province when the two years of cuts are through.

Hon Mr Hodgson: We'll have to wait and see to a certain extent to see what works out in the field when we bring this in.

Mr Pichette: The estimates process is just beginning and we have to fully cost Bill 52 before that decision can be made. At this point in time, again, we're giving you known facts. There are 32 aggregate resources officers. Now, I might qualify that, strictly the private land side. It's strictly the private land. The aggregate resources officer only deals with the private land. That association is only those officers who deal with private land.

Ms Martel: So you're not clear where they're getting the number 16 from, then?

Mr Pichette: No. Again, those numbers haven't been ascertained at this point in time.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I have a question, Mr Chair, if I could ask your indulgence for a minute. There was a presentation from some aggregate producers up in northern Ontario around Sudbury that asked for the designation of the area around Sudbury to be expanded. I know that's an area that's near and dear to Shelley's heart; it's your riding. Do you have an opinion on that, if we expanded the designation?

1020

Ms Martel: I'm going to move an amendment today on behalf of the producers that would designate the rest of Ontario at a minimum. If that can't be done, then request that the ministry look particularly at the situation in Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury where you see the greatest contrast between those who operate under designation and specific rules and those who don't.

Hon Mr Hodgson: So will your amendment have a specific geographical area around Sudbury?

Ms Martel: It is a general amendment that calls for a blanket designation of the province, at this point. If the ministry's interested, we could probably work through an amendment that narrows it down, if that's what you want to do to accomplish that.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Yes, I'd be willing to look at that. In the interest of fairness, Mr Chair, if I could ask your indulgence, my colleague, Mr Brown, probably wants to ask something. Probably not. It's up to you, Mike.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I really don't have any specific questions of the minister; I will of the parliamentary assistant and staff as we go through the bill.

I still am absolutely at a loss to understand why we're proceeding with this bill without the regulations. It's like hanging on to Jell-O. It is very difficult to know what this bill means without seeing those regulations. It's been the point from the very beginning of the opposition's concern with this bill, or our main concern. It's very difficult to know. I think you should be totally comfortable with that argument after the Bill 171 hearings, where both you and I made that request repeatedly —

Hon Mr Hodgson: Yes, I thought it was awful.

Mr Michael Brown: — and were responded to by the minister with over 1,000 pages of data. I don't understand why that couldn't have been made available to the committee. Obviously you can't implement this act till those regulations are ready anyway, so it doesn't change anything in terms of your time lines on this bill. That is the basic point of all of this.

Many of us are concerned that every action of this government increases the power of the executive council and reduces the input of the Legislative Assembly and therefore the people of Ontario, whom all of us, regardless of party, attempt to represent. This concentration of power in the executive council and in the Premier's office I think should be offensive to all of us. Quite frankly, it is the opposite view that you're now taking from what you took when you were on this side of the House. I think there should be some obligation on ministers of the crown to protect the democracy in this province and protect those of us who attempt to represent the constituents across this province. This total —

Hon Mr Hodgson: I do have another meeting, Mike, if you could let me respond.

The standards will not be weakened. I know what you're getting at on this. We're going to post the regulations to get as much public comment as possible. I would like to point out, though, that there is a reason for doing it this way. When you have an act, it's very difficult to change that, and you mentioned when we were on Bill 171, how many times in your history around this place

have the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Mines been able to get legislation on the floor. So if you put it into stone, so to speak, before the House on a number of things that should be dealt with in regulation, it becomes inflexible to improve. That's one of the reasons why we're doing this, is to put it in the regulations so that we can make things better or adapt over time without having to try to wait to get it back on the legislative agenda.

I know Shelley would have some sympathy for this because I know there's changes you probably wanted to make in the Mining Act and it's hard to get it back on the agenda on the House time. There's accountability into this act that's an improvement over other pieces of legislation. For instance, it has to report back to the Legislature each year on where the money's gone through the trust.

Mr Michael Brown: You didn't find that very convincing on 171.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Actually, there was a reason for that as well. I wish the manuals were done on Bill 171 at the same time as the act as well. But I would like to thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Minister.

Ms Martel: May I make a friendly suggestion as the minister is leaving? I would really encourage you to have the participation of your own working group in the development of the regulations, if they have not been developed yet. You said they wouldn't be released until mid-November. I'm assuming the work is still starting.

Some of those people who came before us were particularly unhappy that they saw the bill the day it was introduced. I know they've requested that you allow them to help in the drafting.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I met with them —

Ms Martel: I think that would go a long way for you right now to actually involve them in that, because they are very good folks who are committed to trying to make the process a bit better.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I hope the government side will forgive me if you don't get equal questioning time. I have another meeting, if that's okay.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Oh, they don't have any questions.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Okay, thank you. For the record, Shelley, I have met with the working group and we have discussed that.

Ms Martel: Yes, we know.

The Chair: Okay, just one housekeeping item: In order to allow Ms Martel to be in the House for 11 o'clock for a private member's bill she's introducing and Mr Brown wants to address that particular bill, we are only going to meet until 11 o'clock this morning. Then we will recess until 3:30 this afternoon.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): Mr Chairman, on housekeeping, could we possibly have a window open?

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Lynn Mellor): I will attempt to do it.

Mr Michael Brown: Good idea.

The Chair: We can certainly accommodate that.

Clerk of the Committee: Not necessarily. I think they're bolted shut.

Mr Michael Brown: I don't believe I've received the legislative research summary of this bill, of the presentations. No, the research one. That's the ministry's. The summaries of the presentations.

The Chair: Okay, the clerk will check on that, Mr Brown. I'm not sure whether we received that. We received one after the first two days.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes, but we've had hearings since then.

The Chair: The final one involved the last day of hearings and I don't believe we've seen that, so we'll check on the availability of that.

Okay, we'll now proceed into clause-by-clause and get done what we can this morning and we will continue on this afternoon.

Are there any amendments to section 1?

Ms Martel: Mr Chair, before we begin, do we have everyone's amendments now and can we put them in order? Because we were receiving amendments in front of us as the minister was speaking, so it would be helpful if the clerk could just advise which ones are coming up until we can get them in order.

Clerk of the Committee: Yes, I put mine into an order so I can indicate where we're at.

Ms Martel: Thank you.

The Chair: Do I understand all the amendments have been received?

Ms Martel: I think they're all here, yes.

Mr Michael Brown: Legislative counsel is still working on a number of ours but they're not till later on in the bill. They will be available as soon as counsel is finished with them, but they don't pertain to the first section. We apologize for that, but under the very tight time lines that we've been working, it's been a little difficult for counsel to get them ready in time. We asked counsel if they would prepare the first group so we could deal with them without delaying the committee in any way.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): Mr Chairman, I would like clarification. We had a distribution this morning and do I understand that what was distributed at the table today we have not seen before, that these are amendments in addition to the amendments that were tabled previously?

Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

The Chair: This group, starting with subsection (3)?

Mr Klees: That's right.

The Chair: Yes, they are additions.

Mr Klees: Okay.

The Chair: Can we proceed with section 1? Did you get an answer on the —

Clerk of the Committee: Not yet.

The Chair: Are there any amendments to section 1?

Mr Klees: I move that section 1 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(0.1) Subsection 1(1) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as amended by the Statutes of Ontario, 1994, chapter 23, section 61 and 1994, chapter 27, section 126, is amended by adding the following definition:

"'abandoned pits and quarries' means pits and quarries for which a licence or permit was never in force at any time after December 31, 1989 ('puits d'extraction et carrières abandonnés')."

1030

Subsection 1(6) of the bill adds a new subsection 1(2) to the act to attempt to define abandoned pits and quarries. However, as currently worded, abandoned pit fund moneys could be applied to sites formerly licensed and since revoked under the Aggregate Resources Act.

This motion clarifies that sites previously authorized under the act will not be eligible for abandoned pit fund moneys. Instead, those sites will be clearly covered by the pooled fund, which would be administered by the trust as described in item 1 of the new subsection 6.1(2). So the motion is also more appropriately placed with other definitions in the act in subsection 1(1) instead of 1(2).

Mr Michael Brown: If I'm understanding this correctly, the pooled funds will be looking after all pits and quarries, regardless of whether they ever held a licence or not?

Mr Klees: No.

Mr Michael Brown: No. That's backwards.

Mr Klees: That's why we're introducing this definition, this clarification.

Mr Michael Brown: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any further discussion on that amendment? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

Are there any further amendments to section 1?

Mr Klees: I do have another one.

I move that subsection 1(6) of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"(6) Subsection 1(2) of the act is repealed."

Bill 52 repealed subsection 1(2) of the act and substituted a new subsection dealing with abandoned pits and quarries. The previous motion more appropriately places that substitution in the definitions subsection. This motion retains the repealing provision.

The Chair: Any discussion on that? Any questions? Shall the proposed amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

Are there any further amendments to section 1? Seeing none, shall section 1, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 1, as amended, carries.

Amendments to section 2?

Ms Martel: I have a question for the parliamentary assistant. I believe I'm in the right section. We had a discussion about whether or not the ministry's intention was to have crown employees or any other person designated as inspectors for the purposes of the act. I believe the parliamentary assistant had indicated that the reference here was to crown employees, but if that's the case, I think the whole section should be deleted and we revert to the old wording to make that clear. My concern in this section is that "any person" doesn't mean, for me, a crown employee.

Mr Klees: If I recall correctly that exchange that we had, I clarified at the time that one of the reasons we wanted the wording as it is is to ensure that we could designate responsibilities to employees of another minis-

try. If you recall, we're looking at designated MTO staff to carry out some of these responsibilities. That was one of the reasons, because if we left it under the existing wording, it would limit us to employees of MNR. It's our intention to allow for the flexibility as the wording provides now, and we would not be prepared to entertain an amendment to that section.

Ms Martel: If I might, to the parliamentary assistant, you make a specific amendment under subsection 32(1) where you do say very clearly that the minister may authorize any employee or class of employees of the Ministry of Transportation to exercise any power or perform any duty vested in the minister under this part. That's a whole section that talks about wayside permits and allows the MTO employees to look after that.

My question is, is it your intention then to have MTO employees look after other responsibilities under this act which would clearly fall under the domain of MNR employees, ie, with respect to licensing and inspection of operator sites, not just MTO wayside pits?

Mr Klees: I think the intent here is that we allow ourselves the flexibility to have other employees perhaps from other ministries perform functions, or beyond that. The direction we are taking, as you know, in this bill is to bring into partnership the private sector in many areas. I think as the minister indicated earlier, what we're really trying to do in this legislation is to provide ourselves some flexibility to accommodate circumstances and to ensure that we're carrying out the functions in the most efficient way. Based on that, we do feel that this latitude is necessary.

Ms Martel: Then I say to the parliamentary assistant, I'll have to vote against this section because what I want to avoid and what I see can happen under this section is that you would actually have people from the industry who could do inspectors' work. I don't think that's appropriate and I don't think the public will think it's appropriate. That's really why I wanted that clarification and that whole section dropped.

Mr Klees: I appreciate that.

Mr Michael Brown: On the same point, we had at least one presenter I can recall speak to what they had as a perception that an MTO employee would not be the appropriate person to be inspecting his own ministry, that in MTO's case they have a very vested interest in the wayside pits etc, and they thought that perhaps a more neutral third party might be the appropriate inspector; ie, somebody from MNR. What are your thoughts? Do you have any concerns regarding the fact that MTO inspectors would be inspecting themselves, so to speak?

Mr Klees: I want to clarify that there's no intention whatsoever that the enforcement function be delegated to MTO employees or any other ministry employees other than MNR. It's with regard to some of the other functions that we envision the delegation of responsibility, but enforcement will clearly remain with MNR employees.

Beyond that, I also want to confirm for you that any delegation of responsibility that we place on employees of other ministries, should that happen, all of them would be under obligation to enforce the regulations of the act. If they don't do so, they will be in contravention and we would have to deal with that. I think in the interests of

what we're trying to achieve here in this legislation, I'll restate again that we need that flexibility to make those delegations when appropriate.

Mr Michael Brown: I appreciate the assurances, but the act and what you're saying don't say the same thing. What the act does is permit you with the absolute ultimate in flexibility, without any restriction. I really don't have much problem with what you're telling me, but as a Legislature our responsibility is to make laws that say what you mean. This doesn't say that. For that reason, we can't support it.

I don't understand why you can't spell this out clearly in terms of what the ministry's really looking for. I understand the need for flexibility in operations; I think everybody does. But if you want that, tell us how you're going to do it. This is just so broad it permits any minister at any time to do whatever he or she might deem appropriate, which may not be what the Legislature at that time deems to be appropriate. Not to put too fine a point on it, but it's just wide open. There's absolutely nothing restricting the minister in this situation.

Mr Klees: Mr Brown, I appreciate your comments and I can assure you that we will treat the latitude of this legislation with the utmost of care and in a responsible manner. We obviously agree to disagree on this particular point.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm taking you at your word. That's not the problem. But governments change. You may not be the parliamentary assistant 15 years from now.

1040

Mr Klees: Or next week. Who knows?

Mr Michael Brown: Exactly. Or the minister changes.

I think if I talked to my colleague Ms Martel, they would probably have hoped in 171 to have nailed down a few of those items within that act in the act rather than permitting the regulations to do it.

What I'm saying is that this has nothing to do with the government that's presently in power, because governments come and governments go. Your assurance is fine for now, but down the road, who knows?

Mr Klees: Let's deal with that down the road then. I appreciate your confidence. Thank you.

Mr Michael Brown: But the Legislature doesn't get a shot at it.

The Chair: Okay, thank you, Mr Brown. Shall section 2 carry?

Mr Michael Brown: We'd like a recorded vote.

The Chair: Mr Brown has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour of section 2?

Ayes

Danford, Klees, Maves, Ross, Stewart, Tascona, Young.

Nays

Michael Brown, Martel, Papatello.

The Chair: Section 2 carries.

Mr Brown, according to the legislative people, the summary was hand-delivered to everyone's office.

Mr Michael Brown: Okay. I'll have to find it then.

The Chair: Are there any amendments to section 3?

Ms Martel: I move that section 3 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“(2.1) Section 5 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

“(2.1) All private land in Ontario shall be deemed to have been designated under subsection (2) on the day that section 3 of the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996 comes into force.”

The purpose of the amendment is to, as a matter of principle and frankly as a matter of practicality, allow for designation of the entire province. We heard, particularly during the presentation made by the Northern Ontario Aggregate Producers, of the discrepancies between operators who operate in lands that are designated and those who operate in lands that aren't, how uneven the regulations are, then, that are applied, and frankly how they find that to be discriminatory, particularly in the sense of their ability to compete, because they have costs that those who operate in undesignated areas don't.

The amendment I am moving, which comes from the aggregate producers, is one that would say that the ministry would move to designate all areas. That would do two things, frankly: ensure that the environmental standards that are set are applied evenly right across the province and also provide for, I suspect, a much more even field for those producers who currently operate now outside of the regulations and outside of the designated areas.

Mr Klees: I think you heard the minister indicate a willingness to consider that. What I'd like to propose is that because we haven't seen this amendment until this very moment — we certainly are aware of the issue and there's obviously some support. I can tell you personally that I see the rationale for extending the designation, whether it's to the entire province or, as you indicated, you might be willing to compromise on some specific limitations of that.

As you're aware, and it's my understanding, the designation can take place by regulation. It does not have to take place through legislation. Perhaps I could give you an undertaking that we will review this and we could be in discussion with you and perhaps Mr Brown, and we will then deal with this matter through regulation. We have to consider the cost implications of this, as you're aware. There are implications to how we deal administratively with taking on that additional burden.

If you're agreeable to that, that would be my proposal.

Ms Martel: I'd be happier if it was in the act, for a number of reasons. However, given that I do believe you're going to have to have some discussions with the producers, I'll wait and accept that it will be discussed further with us as well to determine exactly what the implications are and how far the ministry can move in this respect.

The Chair: Mr Brown, any comment?

Mr Michael Brown: My understanding is that at present we do have some difficult areas that are not designated. We've had people from Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie, but there may be more. Does the ministry have an estimate of how much land really is needed to rectify those problems? As a northern member and a northern rural member, I understand there is quite a bit of differ-

ence in operations across all of the north and I would have some concern myself about automatically bringing the designation all across the province when it may achieve very little and cost the government a great deal of money, and municipalities and operators a tremendous amount of money, and not really improve much of anything. Do we have an estimate of how many townships — I've heard 11, 16, that kind of number — in terms of the problem areas where this is of some difficulty?

Mr Klees: Mr Brown, if I might, I know that you have some concerns about this, which is the reason I suggested that we have some further discussion around this. What we don't want to do is solve one problem and create a problem for someone else.

Mr Michael Brown: That's my concern.

Mr Klees: I'd suggest, rather than deal with the details of that here, we agree that we'll have some further discussions around that, we'll look at the details, we'll look at the implications, and then deal with it through regulation.

Mr Michael Brown: Are you suggesting we stand this down for now?

The Chair: Do you want to stand this section down? You don't want to withdraw your amendment? You want to stand this section down?

Mr Klees: Mr Chair, if I might, my preference here is that we not deal with this matter by way of amendment to the legislation. That's what my recommendation is, that we deal with it through regulation. I thought we had agreed that that's how we were going to do it. If so, I don't see the need to stand this down.

The Chair: Ms Martel, are you prepared to withdraw your amendment? Okay. Any further amendments to section 3? Shall section 3 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 3 carries.

Are there any amendments to section 4? I guess we have two that are identical, one submitted by the Liberals, one by the NDP. So on a first-come, first-served basis we'll deal with Mr Brown first.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that subsection 6.1(1) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by striking out “may” in the first line and substituting “shall.”

We are concerned, as some presenters have also been, about the permissive nature of the word “may.” We do not understand why there is any degree of discretion here for the minister whatever. By substituting “shall,” it means it will be done. That's the short answer.

Mr Klees: The concern we have here is that, as you know, the trust has not yet been established. As you know, the ministry is in discussion with the industry in terms of establishing first of all the composition of that trust, the drafting of the trust agreement, the details around how that trust will be established.

We're very positive about the discussions. The reason it was drafted as is is that, again, we felt we needed to allow ourselves the option that if the discussions did not result in as positive a conclusion as the ministry expects, we have the alternative to deal with this is another way.

This binds us to carry through with this regardless of what the discussions result in, so again our preference

here would be that we have the flexibility and the latitude to deal with circumstances as they arise.

Mr Michael Brown: That is the strangest explanation I have ever heard. This is one of the pillars of this bill, the establishment of the trusts. If there's anything that's important about this bill, it is the establishment of these trusts. Giving the minister discretion about whether he or she may want to establish a trust is incomprehensible.

If the government is having trouble with negotiations, and I can understand that these things are complex, the minister certainly has the ability not to proclaim this until he gets it right. But to say that he might not do it is just not on. That's what this bill is about. This is one of the pillars of the bill. To give a minister discretion on this is, like, why are we here?

The Chair: Ms Martel, do you have a comment to make here?

Ms Martel: I just have to agree with my colleague. If I remember the minister's statements even vaguely, remember his statements in the House, this is the whole point of this bill; it's one of the pillars of it. Certainly I didn't get any indication whatsoever from representatives from the industry who came forward that there was any kind of problem in terms of a disagreement that it may or may not be established.

There may be some negotiations that have to go on to work out the details of how it's administered and what the obligations are etc, but I don't think we should be sitting here today determining whether or not the minister's going to do this. He's made a very specific commitment. He's talked about money that's going to go into it and he's made it really clear that this is going to happen. So do yourself a favour: Change it to "shall" and let's just keep going.

Mr Klees: We don't disagree with you in terms of the centrality of the trust. I gave you an explanation as to why the original drafting by legislative counsel was exactly as it is. If you feel strongly about it, I'm prepared to agree to it.

Mr Michael Brown: Settled.

The Chair: Okay. All those in favour of the amendment as presented by Mr Brown? Any opposed? The amendment is carried.

Any further amendments to section 4?

Ms Martel, your amendment then is withdrawn because it's identical.

Ms Martel: Mr Chair, I move that subsection 6.1(3) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"The trustee

"(3) The minister shall appoint a person who is an employee of the" —

The Chair: Can I just interrupt you for a minute? There is a government amendment that precedes this one of yours, as I understand the numbering system here.

Mr Klees: I move that section 6.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Payments to trust

"(6.1) Any amount payable to the trust is a debt due to the trust."

The Chair: I'm a little confused here. That's not the one I thought you were going to introduce in the order that I have here.

Mr Klees: If you want another one, I'll give you another one.

The Chair: I'm trying to get them in the right order.

Mr Klees: Okay, I'll give you the next one.

The Chair: I believe the next one in order would be 6.1(2)?

Mr Klees: That's it. It was in the wrong order in my book. We may have to designate the responsibility for ordering these amendments to another employee. Would you like me to go ahead now?

The Chair: In actual fact, it is 11 o'clock. We did agree to recess at 11. That will give the clerk an opportunity to put the amendments in order, and maybe this afternoon we can have less confusion. We will start with 6.1(2). We're recessed until 3:30.

The committee recessed from 1055 to 1533.

The Vice-Chair (Mr Bart Maves): We'll pick up where we left off. I believe we were considering, in section 4, a government motion. Mr Klees, could you move that motion?

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 6.1(2) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following paragraph:

"5. Such other matters as may be specified by the minister."

This amendment effectively will allow more flexibility in the operations of the trust as it evolves. The current provisions limit the objects that are expressly identified. The same provision is found in section 67 of the bill respecting the establishment of the oil, gas and salt resources trust.

Mr Michael Brown: Just to clarify, what conceivable other matters might there be?

Mr Klees: As you know, we are setting this trust up. It doesn't exist now. By the way, we have now ensured that the trust will be set up. Over the course of time, as matters evolve, there may be, from time to time, matters that have to be addressed, and it's only prudent that we allow ourselves that latitude.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm trying to think of what could be outside of 1 through 4 here.

Mr Klees: If you're asking if we have anything specific in mind, no. What we are doing is setting the framework to allow for other matters that may have to be dealt with, and without this we feel we may be precluding that flexibility.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? I declare the amendment carried.

Any further amendments to section 4?

Ms Martel: I move that section 6.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Use of payments

"(2.1) Payments made under paragraph 4 of subsection (2) to the crown in right of Ontario, a regional municipality or a local municipality shall be used only for the purpose of environmental protection or rehabilitation."

I was advised earlier by legislative counsel that the crown cannot appear in this particular amendment because only the crown can determine disbursements of funds, but let me explain to the parliamentary assistant why I'm moving this particular amendment. I want to make it clear that money that comes out of the trust and then is paid to a municipality or a regional municipality is going to be used for very specific purposes, either for rehabilitation or environmental protection. I'm trying to narrow the scope to ensure that money that goes in for a specific purpose, when it goes out to municipalities and regional municipalities has to be for that intended purpose. "The crown" should be deleted because if it's kept in, as it appears, it will be out of order.

The Vice-Chair: This amendment is out of order.

Ms Martel: Because "the crown" appears, right?

The Vice-Chair: As it's read.

Ms Martel: Then I would want to just strike out from "the crown in right of Ontario," and then have it read, "Payments made under paragraph 4 of subsection (2) to a regional municipality or a local municipality shall be used...." Do you want me to read the whole thing again? Subsection (2.1) is revised and would read, "(2.1) Payments made under paragraph 4 of subsection (2) to a regional municipality or a local municipality shall be used only for the purpose of environmental protection or rehabilitation."

The Vice-Chair: Does that satisfy counsel? Okay. With that change in the motion, in the amendment, then it is in order. Shall we have some discussion on this? You've given some introductory comments? Does the parliamentary assistant wish to comment?

Mr Klees: I'd like to point out that the ministry already has the authority to focus the manner and purpose of any disbursements under clause 67(f) of the Aggregate Resources Act. That's done by regulation. Our position would be that this amendment, on the basis of the fact that the authority is there already, would be redundant and not necessary.

Ms Martel: If I might, though, the disbursement here is being made by the trust, not by the minister, and the trust is a new creation under this particular act. My argument would be that you've clearly got two different sets of authority. Whatever the minister does in terms of disbursements of other moneys is unrelated to what I'm trying to get at here, which is my concern that the money that flows out is tightly monitored, that it goes out for the very specific purposes, as I've outlined, of environmental protection or rehabilitation, and that the municipalities, regional or local, are authorized to spend but only in that regard.

1540

Mr Klees: I understand your concern. I would give you the assurance that there will be very focused limitations in terms of the disbursement of those funds. The trust will be under very clear direction through the trust agreement as to how those moneys would be disbursed. As you're probably aware, the trust is directly responsible to the minister, and the minister must report on an annual basis to the assembly. With all of those safeguards in

place, we would not feel comfortable in supporting this amendment.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Then I'll put the question: Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? I declare the motion lost.

The next motion I have is a Liberal motion.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that subsection 6.1(3) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by striking out "may" in the first line and substituting "shall."

This is a relatively simple, straightforward amendment which says, "The minister shall appoint a trustee," rather than "may." The argument's similar to the one made this morning.

Mr Klees: I'd just like to get a further clarification from Mr Brown as to why he's asking for this.

Mr Michael Brown: We're setting up a trust that isn't discretionary. Setting up a trust means that you must appoint a trustee outside of the crown. I think that's what you're intending to do.

Mr Klees: Yes.

Mr Michael Brown: Why would you say "may," which is permissive? As a matter of fact, I don't think it does what you want it to do unless it says "shall."

Mr Klees: I don't personally have a problem with it. I'd like you to give me about 30 seconds to confer. I'm prepared to support that.

Mr Michael Brown: Well, thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The amendment carries.

Our next motion on subsection 6.1(3) is similar.

Ms Martel: I move that subsection 6.1(3) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Trustee

"(3) The minister shall appoint a person who is an employee of the crown as trustee of the trust."

I'm moving this because I believe that the responsibilities with respect to the trust and the important work with respect to rehabilitation and all of the other things that are outlined in sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 should remain under the jurisdiction of a crown employee. It is the same situation that has already been in place for some time under the Mining Act where the rehabilitation funds and disbursement of the same fall under the jurisdiction and responsibility of a crown employee. It is my feeling that there is more accountability in that respect above the accountability that the minister has because this has to come and be reported to the House on an annual basis. For that reason, I would move that the person be a crown employee.

Mr Klees: We take the position that we would prefer that it not be an employee of the crown. We believe this is clearly a function that can be performed by someone who is not an employee of the government. Part of the intent of what we're trying to do through this legislation is to remove government from those functions that could be adequately performed by someone other than the province. We really feel this amendment would defeat the flexibility we're trying to achieve by establishing the trust

and by shifting a lot of the administrative responsibilities outside of the purview of government.

Ms Martel: The disagreement we'll have here and in section 15 is fundamentally about the change in direction the government is making. I see most of what is happening here is a direct result of the layoffs the minister has already announced, and now you're trying to find the bodies to fill that in. I don't think we're going to come to a successful resolution of this matter.

The Vice-Chair: Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The amendment is not carried.

The next two motions are identical: a Liberal motion and an NDP motion. The NDP motion arrived first so I'd like to hear that motion. Sorry, Mr Brown.

Ms Martel: If there are some others, we can switch later, Mike, if you want.

I move that section 6.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Advisory committee

"(3.1) The minister shall establish a committee composed of representatives of the aggregate industry, environmental organizations, municipalities and others to advise the trustee of the trust on the exercise of the trustee's functions."

The reason this amendment is being moved is that during the course of the public hearings I believe we heard a number of presenters who expressed concerns about how funds would be disbursed, who would have control over the disbursement of such funds and how other stakeholders outside the industry who are interested in aggregate resource extraction could have some role, a meaningful one, in how the entire trust would work.

The way I have chosen to get around that is by making it clear that the minister will not only have the power to appoint a trustee who will be administratively responsible but that trustee will also have to get some advice, take input etc from other stakeholders who are interested in all these matters. It's trying to respond to those concerns that were raised.

Mr Klees: If I might respond to that. Ms Martel, I believe we will achieve your end goal. We made note of the comments that were made throughout the hearings and we agreed that it should be a broad base, that there should be broad input into the trust and into the management of the trust.

The way this will function is that the trustee to be appointed will be a corporation. The corporation will have a board of directors, and that board of directors will then be broadly constituted to ensure that representation from other stakeholders is there. We would then look to that board of directors to effectively provide what you're looking to this committee to bring to the table.

We feel that by establishing an additional committee we would be creating some unnecessary levels of involvement. We feel we will achieve the same end goal you have in mind through the constitution of the board of directors.

Ms Martel: If I might, Mr Chair, I'd be perfectly happy to withdraw this amendment if I could get a government one that would put that in place. Obviously my

concern is that if that is your intention — you've already set out for the trustee what some of the responsibilities of the trust will be — if you're that far down the road to know that you will have a board of directors that has multi-stakeholder representation, why don't we put it in?

Mr Klees: You and I are going to disagree about how we go about this, I'm sure, because we intend to do that through regulation. I don't think, at this point in time, we would be prepared to incorporate that into the legislation itself.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? I declare the motion lost.

The next motion is a government motion. Mr Klees.

1550

Mr Klees: I move that section 6.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Payments to trust

"(6.1) Any amount payable to the trust is a debt due to the trust."

This simply provides for a mechanism for the trust to recover overdue accounts. Characterizing the amounts payable to the trust as a debt allows the trust to take whatever action may be necessary to recover overdue amounts.

Mr Michael Brown: A question of clarification on that matter: If one fell behind in the payment of moneys to the trust, would that be subject to a suspension of the licence of the operator?

Mr Klees: I'm told yes by staff flanking me.

Mr Michael Brown: So you would be in the unenviable situation, perhaps, of trying to collect a debt due from someone who is not operating.

Mr Klees: I think the other side of it, Mr Brown, is that it would probably ensure that these fees are paid, because to lose one's licence is a pretty strong consequence.

Mr Michael Brown: I understand. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? I'll put the question. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

The next amendment I have is an NDP motion.

Ms Martel: I move that section 6.1(11) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be struck out.

This section concerns the refund that will be going back to operators in the province, as I understand the changes that the government proposes. Under the act that's in place now operators get a refund of money which has been held as credit in the case of their having achieved certain rehabilitation processes they had set out to achieve. They get a refund of the money that had been held in trust. If I read this properly it appears that one year after the new act goes into effect, after the changes go into effect, all operators are going to get a refund of money that before had been held in trust, whether or not their rehabilitation had been completed.

I am moving this because I don't understand why we would do that. It seems to me that part of the purpose of having the money in trust is to guarantee that there will always be enough funds to deal with ongoing operations,

but also abandoned operations. I know you want to hold \$5 million to \$7 million aside and use that for sites where licences have been revoked or which operators have abandoned etc, but I'm not sure why you would give money back to people. I don't see what the incentive is then for them to continue to do their rehabilitation. Why would you change a process that currently has been in place?

Mr Klees: If I might respond to that, the problem is one of practicality. Right now there are some 4,800 accounts that the sixty-some-odd million dollars are spread out over. What we're facing now is that most of that money isn't being used simply because they aren't in contravention. Because of the fact that they are now specifically focused for those accounts we cannot move money from one account to another or use those dollars for general rehabilitation.

What this floating fund does is to free up — you're right — by way of refund on a pro rata basis to those individuals who have made contributions to the fund, but it then creates a floating fund that can be used for rehabilitation across the province, wherever it's needed.

Right now we don't have that flexibility. Your amendment would effectively force the fund to stay at the \$60 million. It would force us to retain the full \$60 million because we wouldn't be in a position, with your amendment, to refund those dollars that aren't needed in the fund.

As I said, it's been on deposit now for a number of years and it's so impractical that it's simply on deposit. All these companies are carrying these assets on their balance sheets. It's not our money. We're simply returning money to the industry that's theirs in any event. The quid pro quo to this is that we're now creating a floating fund that will actually be useful to us in rehabilitation.

Ms Martel: If I understand how the current act works, you return the money to them upon their successful completion of rehabilitation. Am I wrong in that understanding?

Mr Pichette: Maybe I can speak to this. Their accounts are closed off when the licences are surrendered and effectively all the rehabilitation is completed. Our analysis has indicated that from a perspective of dealing with defaults, those sites that are left abandoned without enough money in the account, we'll need somewhere in the order of \$6 million to \$10 million in the floating fund. As a result there isn't a need to keep the \$60 million in an account to do that.

There is provision for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to add a fee for a prescribed time to replenish the fund, should it get too low. That is basically the intent. We're returning their money because we feel there will be sufficient dollars in the floating fund at the \$6-million to \$10-million range. Currently on an average basis, in terms of sites that are being revoked and deemed abandoned, it doesn't come anywhere near the \$6-million to \$10-million pricetag in terms of rehabilitation per year, not even close to it.

Mr Klees: Perhaps I could just add that the circumstance we face right now is that it's very possible to have one site that has a segregated amount of money, say \$5,000, dedicated to it; it requires rehabilitation, but the

rehabilitation cost may well be \$50,000, and all that's available for that site under the current structure is \$5,000. We have no way of moving money from other accounts to that particular site. This restructuring is going to allow us to spend the \$50,000 on that particular site because of the floating nature of the fund.

Ms Martel: I'm not disagreeing with the floating nature and the pool where you would have no other money to deal with defaults. My only concern is, what incentive or what kind of security does the government then have that operators who continue to operate are setting aside the right amount in funds to deal with their legitimate rehabilitation costs?

As I see it now, because they have to put that on deposit, the government has some security that there is going to be money there when that starts. You will have more and more people continuing to operate and at a certain point that floating fund, I would think, is going to expire. I see it as an additional form of security for the government that money already in there is held for people who are legitimately doing what they are supposed to be doing plus the floating fund being available to deal with people who have abandoned their responsibilities.

Mr Klees: I think I'd like to have staff comment on that.

Mr Pichette: Maybe I can make one comment here. In our analysis of the current system, the process of collecting a security deposit and refunding does very little to encourage rehabilitation. What we have found that encourage rehabilitation are the site plans that were introduced in 1990 under the Aggregate Resources Act, and that progressive rehabilitation and final rehabilitation are a matter of law through those site plans. That's what dictates rehabilitation, not the fact that they can get money back.
1600

Mr Klees: Just one other component to this is that sites are required to do progressive rehabilitation, and as long as they're operating, that is part of the licence agreement. The pooled fund would only be called upon in the event of revocation of a licence, so I think the fact that it's really an insurance — and the basis on which I believe that staff have done the calculation as to how much would be necessary to retain, I think they've used an average of \$300 per hectare of disturbed land that's inventoried right now. It is based on what the projected need is, the projected liability, and staff is advising us that the amount — and we're not firmed up on that amount; you're right that it's in the range of \$5 million to 10 million — but certainly it is based on past experience in terms of what the actual cost would be to rehabilitate.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm a little concerned about the wording. It seems to me, the way this is written, that it would be possible — as a matter of fact it would be mandatory — to refund the money to the person in whose name the account was held even if their licence was in suspension or they were no longer active on the property. Is that the intent, that if we had an operator whose licence was suspended because he had not met the criteria of the act, you would still refund the money to that company or person?

Mr Klees: That's not my understanding, but perhaps I'll have legal counsel speak to that.

Ms Krystine Lintell: Yes, that's right, there is a discretion there in terms of the amount. But, Mr Brown, you're right that those kinds of situations could manifest themselves.

Mr Michael Brown: It does not concern the ministry that we could, in effect, be rewarding or sending money back to a bad operator who had not been meeting the conditions of his or her licence?

Ms Lintell: If it's a situation where there is rehabilitation to be carried out, there would still be a discretion to use part of that, the amount that would otherwise be refunded, to take care of those rehabilitation requirements.

Mr Michael Brown: How so?

Ms Lintell: In such amounts as the minister may direct.

Mr Michael Brown: It says "the trust shall." That doesn't sound like a lot of discretion to me.

Ms Lintell: "...shall refund to the person in whose name the account was held such amount as the minister may direct."

Mr Michael Brown: Oh, I see. That might mean you would withhold a certain amount or maybe — Okay. That helps.

Ms Lintell: That's correct.

Mr Klees: That would seem logical.

Mr Michael Brown: I guess I read it as "may direct" was probably just an interesting way of saying the amounts will vary.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion on Ms Martel's motion? I will put the question. All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion lost.

The next motion is a Liberal motion. Ms Martel, your motion following this is identical, so I'm going to allow Mr Brown to put his.

Mr Michael Brown: I have better luck.

I move that section 6.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 4 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(12) On the day section 4 of the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996 comes into force, all remaining amounts set aside under subsections 14(5) and 24(4) of this act, as those subsections read immediately before the coming into force of section 4, are transferred to the trust."

The Vice-Chair: Under standing order 56, I believe this motion is out of order. Can I quickly quote 56 to you?

"Any bill, resolution, motion or address, the passage of which would impose a tax or specifically direct the allocation of public funds, shall not be passed by the House unless recommended by a message from the Lieutenant Governor, and shall be proposed only by a minister of the crown."

So in layman's terms, we can't —

Mr Michael Brown: I can't ask the government to spend money.

The Vice-Chair: It's directly allocating funds.

Mr Michael Brown: To a private trust. Is directing the allocation of money to a private trust the same as to the crown?

The Vice-Chair: You're still directing the allocation of public funds.

Mr Michael Brown: Maybe it would be private funds to a private trust.

The Vice-Chair: It's out of order.

Ms Martel: If I might provide some clarification, and then the parliamentary assistant can decide whether he wants to do anything in this section.

What we were trying to do was ensure that all money that was related to both the abandoned pit and quarry fund and the money that was in the rehabilitation security system would be transferred at the same time. That was the point of the amendment, just to make sure that all funds that were being held for those two purposes flowed into the trust at the same time. Whether or not you want to do something with it, that was the clarification we were trying to have around this section.

Mr Klees: I understand your intent, and let me just be clear that part of the complication here is that the crown has some outstanding commitments now and has some projects under way and needs the ability to complete those obligations and, therefore, needs to be able to draw on some of those funds that are there. What we wouldn't be prepared to do is to give an undertaking that every dollar would be transferred immediately. We have to retain some of those dollars in order to complete those undertakings.

I understand your concern, and in the fullness of time those dollars will in fact be transferred to the trust, net of what is required by the crown to complete its obligations.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. The motion is out of order, and seeing no further motions on section 4, I'll put the question. Shall section 4, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare section 4, as amended, carried.

Moving along to section 5, I have a motion from the Liberals.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that section 5 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"5. (1) Subsection 7(2) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"Application for licence

"(2) Any person may apply to the minister for a licence.

"(2) Clause 7(3)(b) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"(b) ten copies of the report referred to in section 9."

The reason for the amendment is that we were wondering why there is a distinction in classes of licences between (a) and (b) and why, from an environmental standpoint, they would be treated differently. This was raised by a number of presenters, in particular I believe the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

Mr Klees: The reason for the two classes of licences — and I think you're certainly well familiar with this business and I'm actually surprised that this amendment is coming from you —

Mr Michael Brown: You can never tell.

Mr Klees: We've had some discussion about the issue of a level playing field and the need to recognize that there are different sizes and different levels of operation, and that is the reason for the two different classes of

licences at this point in time. I think you'll agree that it's difficult to hold a very small operator to some of the same operational standards that a major operator would be subjected to. The capabilities are different and the circumstances are very different, so we've tried to recognize that.

What your amendment would result in is the elimination of classes, as you know, and we just feel that fails to recognize the inherent differences in operations that we should be sensitive to. So if you're wondering, I wouldn't be supporting your amendment.

1610

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion?

Ms Martel: I have a question for the parliamentary assistant. Having heard what you just said, I'm looking at your proposed amendment to subsection 9(1), where you're removing the distinction between class A and class B.

Mr Klees: I like my amendment better.

Mr Michael Brown: Better than the answer.

Ms Martel: Didn't you just give a contradictory explanation? Did I miss something here? You said you wouldn't vote for this because it retains the distinction between the two licences, but isn't your amendment coming up going to delete that very distinction?

Mr Klees: No, it is very different. We will be retaining the two classes. What we are saying is that because we're moving to a standards-based structure it's very important that we be able to define the standards up front that would in those cases apply to both classes of licences, but at the same time, we feel it's very important that we be able to make a distinction between the classes of operation.

The Vice-Chair: Seeing no further hands in the air for discussion on the Liberal motion, I will put the question. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion lost.

That being the only proposed amendment to section 5, I will put the question on section 5. Shall section 5 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 5 carries.

Section 6 of the bill: I believe there is a Liberal motion.

Mr Michael Brown: In light of what just happened, I don't think I'll bother to put that one.

The Vice-Chair: The Liberal motion is withdrawn.

Seeing no further motions to amend section 6, I'll put the question on section 6. Shall section 6 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare section 6 carried.

Section 7: I have the government motion first up to amend section 7, subsection 9(1).

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 9(1) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 7 of the bill, be amended by striking out "Class A" in the first line.

The Vice-Chair: Discussion?

Mr Klees: This motion deletes the reference to a class A licence and will create a requirement that a report must accompany both classes of licences. As I was saying earlier, it's not to do away with classes in general but to ensure that the standards-based approach that we're applying to this industry applies to both classes.

Ms Martel: If I might, just for the parliamentary assistant, in this section, as in the section we just dealt

with, all of the requirements that used to appear in the act have been moved into the regulation. We've gone through on this committee on more than one occasion what the opposition's feelings are about that particularly, because we have not had the benefit of seeing the regulation. I will be voting against this section because I really believe the act is much stronger when the wording appears and, secondly, because we should have been able to see some of that work before we ended up in this position. We've been dealing with a shell, and it's been very difficult to do so during the whole process.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion?

Mr Klees: If I might reaffirm for Ms Martel that the end result will be that there will be stronger standards for both classes as a result of the initiative we're taking. As the minister confirmed when he was here this morning, when the regulations are ready by way of draft, they will be circulated to the opposition parties. I think previously I've invited the opposition members to provide us with names of stakeholders or stakeholders' groups that they want those regulations distributed to. We look forward to their input and the circulation of those regulations before they're finalized.

The Vice-Chair: Seeing no further discussion, shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries. Mr Brown.

Mr Michael Brown: Is there not another government motion before?

The Vice-Chair: No, I just have the one, section 7 of the bill, subsection 9(1), which was just read.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm not going to make that. Sorry.

The Vice-Chair: You'll withdraw that motion, then, Mr Brown?

Mr Michael Brown: Yes.

The Vice-Chair: Seeing no further proposed amendments to section 7, I'll put the question. Shall section 7, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 7, as amended, carries.

Moving to section 8, the first motion is a government motion.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 11(3) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 8 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Objections

"(3) Any person may, during the prescribed consultation procedures, give the applicant and the minister written notice stating that the person has an objection to the application and specifying the nature of the objection."

The reason for this is that we believe it's important that the nature of the objection be specified. This will give the opportunity to the applicant to resolve any concerns that may have arisen in the course of the application procedure.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

The next motion on the table is from the Liberal Party. Mr Brown.

Mr Michael Brown: I will not be placing that motion.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Brown withdraws the motion. That's the motion which would have amended subsection 11(5). Now, Mr Brown, there's your next motion, subsection 11(5.1).

Mr Michael Brown: I move that section 11 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 8 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Certain communications not to be considered

"(5.1) The board shall not consider any communications between the applicant and the persons who gave notice of objections if the communications were made for the purpose of attempting to resolve the objections."

The reason for this is that I think we all want the negotiations to take place in good faith. As we all know, in the negotiation process, if it is not done without prejudice, it doesn't necessarily work so well. If, during the negotiation, for example, one side gets to a position and agrees to that, the other side may not agree, but that may be taken as just a negotiating position to go further, if you understand my thinking on this. In other words, I think the negotiations should take place without prejudice. That's essentially what we're trying to do here.

Mr Klees: I'll provide Mr Brown with our comments on this. Our feeling is that it would be certainly imperative, if a matter comes before the board, that they have all of the facts of the matter available to them in order to make an informed decision. Anything of relevant information pertaining to the issue should be available to the board.

So I'm puzzled by this. I understand the concept of "without prejudice." I understand that when two parties are attempting to resolve an issue, you like to know that nothing that may be said in the course of that negotiation will be held against you, but I think what we're dealing with here is a very public issue. We're dealing with an application that, where there is a public interest and if it is referred to the board, I think it wouldn't be appropriate for us to tie the hands of the board as to the information that is made available to it to adjudicate.

1620

Mr Michael Brown: I don't see your problem, frankly. I think all the information could be out on the table. All we're saying is if you've got the CAW negotiating with General Motors, if it's going to go to arbitration, you probably don't want the final offer of either the CAW or General Motors there for them to move one way or the other. The information, fine, but the actual bargaining position, I think, is deteriorated quite a bit when you have that information put forward in the manner that the act, in your view, seems to be indicating. I don't see what the problem is if the understanding is — and that's what we're trying to do. It's just that the negotiations process needs to take place without prejudice if it's going to go to a hearing, if the issue is not resolved.

The reason for doing this is that I think you're going to end up at the hearing more often. The negotiation is not going to be resolved because it's hampered by the fact that it can't just be done in good faith, knowing there's no prejudice involved with offers and counter-offers.

Mr Klees: Mr Brown, I still remain puzzled about this. I don't disagree with you in principle in terms of what

you're trying to achieve, but I'm not sure that it's going to take this amendment to achieve that. Let me ask you this question: In whose interest do you feel this amendment would be? In the public interest?

Mr Michael Brown: I believe it to be in the public interest.

Mr Klees: How is that?

Mr Michael Brown: What it does is make it more likely that negotiations will succeed in resolving the problem before you have to move beyond it. I think it will help the resolution of problems without the hearing process.

Mr Klees: One of the things that I think all of us in this room want to assure is that in the final analysis the highest degree of protection for the public interest is achieved. If in the course of negotiations between two parties around a quarry operation an offer is put on the table that may have been made enthusiastically, may have gone beyond what the board would ultimately adjudicate, is that not in the public interest? Shouldn't we be trying to get the best possible deal for the public on this issue?

I don't think the parallel to an employment contract is applicable here, is all I'm saying. I just fail to get your point. I'm sorry, but I can't support your amendment.

Ms Martel: Can I just ask the parliamentary assistant if he doesn't think that position is a bit contradictory? If you look with respect to the section just above, the referral to the board, I heard you very clearly say that the board should be entitled to receive all of the information, and the public should feel very clear that all of the information has gone to the board in terms of the board being able to render a decision. But in the section just above that, it says very clearly that the minister "may direct that the board shall determine only the issues specified in the referral." So the minister has the ability to scope and to determine what issues will or will not go to the board. I have to argue that it seems to me, if we're really interested in making sure the public gets all of the goods, then we would not allow the minister to have the discretion to scope what goes as a referral before the board.

Mr Klees: They really are two separate issues.

Ms Martel: No.

Mr Klees: There's a difference between scoping a hearing and ensuring that the board deals only with the matters relevant and providing information so that the board can make a decision based on facts. I do see those as two very different issues.

Ms Martel: But my point is it's the minister who decides what's relevant. It's not the board that has that decision, as far as I can read.

Mr Klees: No, I don't think so.

Ms Martel: If the minister scopes and decides what's going to be referred, isn't he or she using their discretion as to what's relevant and what's important and what's in the public interest and what the board should make a final adjudication on?

Mr Klees: I think in that case, the minister has a responsibility to ensure that the matters that are relevant to the issue are being dealt with in an efficient manner by the board. That's all that's about. It's not about withholding information; it's simply about providing focus to the hearings.

What Mr Brown's referring to is the fact that any discussions leading up to a hearing should be privileged, and I can't agree with that.

Ms Martel: I guess my argument is that any information that led up to a decision should be part of what the board, in terms of (5), should be able to get their hands on. If you allow the minister to have some discretion about what information he or she provides to the board, I don't see how that allows the board to have a full airing or to get a full view of all the issues that came before the minister in making a decision in the first place.

Mr Klees: Ms Martel, I hear what you're saying. I think I'll restate what I thought I said previously, and that is that the intent of scoping is to focus the board's attention on those unresolved issues that the proponent was not able to address adequately in the process, rather than have the hearing bring in many other issues that have already been covered. I think part of what this government is attempting to do in streamlining not only this process but many other areas of how government is done in this province is to ensure that we deal with relevant matters, that we try to streamline, that we focus on those matters of importance. I again have to say that I don't think the issue of scoping is what Mr Brown is dealing with here.

Mr Michael Brown: It wasn't in particular, but I had considered making that motion on scoping and didn't place it.

I really don't understand what the problem is here. I think you are going to cause many more hearings. There is not going to be good-faith discussion, because one party or the other — and I'm not sure which — will be unwilling to move to some positions because they are afraid that it might prejudice the hearing before the board. I think you are discouraging good-faith negotiation of the issues, and you're going to end up with more issues being heard before the OMB. That doesn't make any sense to me. I think, if you want a resolution of this matter, you would prefer — at least, I would prefer, I'm sure the citizens would prefer and I'm sure the proponent would prefer — to have good-faith-bargaining negotiations about the particular issues.

I can't give you examples, but I would suggest to you that many negotiations involve a number of items simultaneously, where there's give and take on some, and that's the way it works. You are going to hamper that particular situation by making good-faith bargaining more difficult for both sides.

I think it's in the public interest that we get negotiated settlements for everyone involved. I don't think there are winners or losers here. I think the public wins if the citizens who have a concern or whoever has a concern can come to a reasonable accommodation with the producer.

1630

Mr Klees: Can you give me an example of other areas where this would apply when matters are referred to the board where previous discussions or dealings are kept privileged?

Mr Michael Brown: No, I can't, quite frankly. I'm not familiar enough. I'm not in the business of going to the OMB.

Mr Klees: I can just assure you that I personally have been involved in many negotiations that perhaps ultimately have led to a board hearing somewhere, but the fact that it may ultimately lead to a board hearing has never precluded me from entering into good-faith bargaining. I really don't see —

Mr Michael Brown: Well, you're such an upfront guy, but —

Mr Klees: I really don't see that that's going to be an issue here. I hear you; we have a disagreement in terms of what the implication will be ultimately, but I don't feel that I can support your amendment.

Mr Michael Brown: Just on this particular issue, has the minister considered kind of a mediator in these negotiations, if they look like they're pretty much there or you're informed that they're pretty much there, by one or either side?

What I'm interested in and I think the public's interested in and what I think the government's interested in is resolving the issues surrounding a pit or a quarry and making sure that ends up before a hearing of the OMB as seldom as possible, and that the resolution is actually made by people in the community and people from the company. It doesn't directly relate to this amendment but it is an issue that I believe the minister could be helpful with and I just wonder if the ministry's considered that.

Mr Klees: You're aware that the board can do alternative dispute resolutions.

Mr Michael Brown: I wasn't thinking of the board; I was more thinking of the ministry. All I'm trying to do is to keep it out of the OMB, if we can. If there are legitimate concerns that can't be resolved —

Mr Klees: I assure you I'd like to keep it out of there too, which is one of the reasons that we've put in place this mechanism and tried to put this concept of negotiation between the proponent and the other parties up front. That's really what we're trying to achieve as well. I just have to say again, I fail to see the pitfalls in this, Mr Brown, that you do.

Mr Michael Brown: I surrender.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for that surrender. I'd like to put the question on this amendment. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion lost.

Ms Martel, the next motion is similar so it doesn't need to be put because it's been discussed.

The next motion then is the government motion to section 8.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 11(7) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 8 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Combined hearing

"(7) The board may consider an application and objections referred to the board under subsection (5) and a related appeal to the board under the Planning Act at the same hearing."

The use of the word "referral" in the existing section is no longer accurate due to the changes to the Planning Act. Matters are no longer referred, under Bill 20, to the OMB; they are appealed. This will make the section consistent with the Planning Act.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the amendment carried.

I believe, Mr Klees, you also have the next motion.

Mr Klees: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 11(8) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 8 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The board may hold a hearing and direct the minister to issue the licence subject to the prescribed conditions and to any additional conditions specified by the board, but the minister may refuse to impose an additional condition specified by the board if he or she is of the opinion that the condition is not consistent with the purposes of this act."

The Vice-Chair: Just before you get into some discussion on this, the next Liberal and NDP motions are addressing this same issue but from a different direction, so if this is dealt with then we will probably withdraw those next two.

Ms Martel: Mr Chair, can I speak against this now?

The Vice-Chair: It would be out of order, unless you want to move to amend this government motion at some point. Mr Klees, explanation.

Mr Klees: Mr Chair, what we're effectively attempting to do here is to ensure that the minister has the discretion to ensure that no conditions are imposed by the board that are not under the jurisdiction of the ministry. There have been circumstances where the board has imposed certain conditions that the ministry is not in a position to enforce. Essentially, that is what we're trying to achieve here, to provide that clarification.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you. Any further discussion? Ms Martel?

Ms Martel: Is the ministry not a party to these hearings? Yes. All right. My concern is this: We heard from a couple of presenters who said at the end of the day the board, as the court of last resort, should be the court of last resort and that if people are aware that they can go back to the minister for yet another appeal because he or she continues to have discretion in certain areas, my fear is what you'll get into is a continuing appeal, first to the minister; when the minister says no, then to the OMB. Then a proponent or someone who is objecting to a licence application or whatever may then well end up right back at the minister, saying, "We know you still have discretion in these issues and we'd like you to wield discretionary power to solve X, Y and Z."

I guess my concern is, at what point does what is supposed to be an independent body making final and binding jurisdictions do just that? Because your amendment will allow for the minister to continue to have discretion around some or other of the recommendations that either on conditions or other things that the board may set in place or outline?

Mr Klees: Let's be clear that what we're not intending here — and I think the bill is clear that the recommendations of the board are in fact binding. What we are doing here, however, is giving a discretion to the minister in those areas where the ministry does not have jurisdiction.

Let me give you an example. One of the conditions may well be that trucks are required to tarp, and that's something that is out of the jurisdiction of the MNR and

clearly falls into another ministry's jurisdiction. That simply is what we're trying to address here. There's no intention here that the minister — in fact, the minister does not want to be placed in a position of overturning a board decision. We're simply trying to ensure that what decisions are finally made are enforceable and are within the jurisdiction of our ministry.

Ms Martel: If that's the case, Mr Klees, is there not a way that you can say that so you spell that out very clearly, that that's your intention? Because as I read it here, the only condition that applies is if the minister believes that the condition is not consistent with the purposes of the act. I am assuming those purposes are going to be pretty broad and far-ranging. If what you're trying to get at is, "This ministry has no jurisdiction; this is an MTO responsibility. Therefore, I am going to disregard the condition as imposed by the board because I have no legal mandate to carry it out," then can we find a way to stay that so it's very clear what the ministry's intent is in this case?

Mr Klees: Okay. I thought that we had wording that made it very clear that we're bound, unless it is a matter that is beyond our jurisdiction. I am going to defer to legal counsel who I hope can just confirm and maybe lead us to the place in the bill where that is clear.

Ms Lintell: Again, I would agree with you, Mr Klees, that we certainly thought that in drafting this section that's exactly what we did state.

I don't know what to suggest because it's, yes, a question of it's really beyond the jurisdiction of the ministry to attempt to ensure compliance with certain requirements, but it's clearly not — how shall I say — illegal to impose that kind of condition. It's just our inability to carry out proper enforcement that essentially puts the ministry in a bind where there is other legislation that deals with it much more adequately. Basically, we want to be able, in accepting conditions, to accept those that are properly enforceable through our compliance measures as opposed to measures that are properly enforceable under the Highway Traffic Act, for instance. We were trying to devise a mechanism that achieved that.

1640

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion?

Mr Michael Brown: I'm very uneasy with this section too, for I think the same reason. It's probably the wording that's making me uncomfortable here, just the fact that obviously the minister can't enforce something that's not within his jurisdiction to enforce. I'm not sure this is saying that, and it would seem to give the minister perhaps more discretion than any of us want to give him or her at this juncture, remembering that it's ministers forever. It's not a particular minister; it's ministers forever. Obviously, the minister can't enforce a condition that isn't within their jurisdiction to enforce anyway.

Mr Klees: If I could just draw your attention back to the amendment and perhaps you can help me with this, in the third from the last line of the amendment, at least in my book, "the minister may refuse to impose an additional condition specific by the board" — and here's the operative section — "if he or she is of the opinion that the condition is not consistent with the purposes of this

act.” I think it’s very clear, at least it was to us as it was being drafted, what the circumstances would be under which the minister would not be bound by the decision of the board.

Mr Michael Brown: I’m glad you think it’s clear.

Ms Martel: My only comment to the parliamentary assistant is, it might be clear to you and to the drafter; however, we’ve got to deal with a piece of legislation that other people will also interpret. My concern about “consistent with the purposes of this act” is that the act has broader purposes than just compliance. If we’re trying to get at the ministry’s ability to enforce compliance because it’s not part of their authority, then let’s get at that, but I think when you use “purposes of this act” that has a much broader sweep because there’s a whole range of ministerial activity or ministry activities that take place under the act.

All we’re trying to get at is that we agree that you have come up with some problems that are identified in the explanatory notes. How we narrow the scope to feel at ease that what we’re doing is really limiting the minister’s discretion to those specific areas around monitoring and compliance is I think what we’re trying to get at, and if you can find a different bit of wording to do that, I think we can probably support this.

Mr Klees: Just on that subject, I think one of the things that we are trying to achieve was not have it too narrow.

Mr Michael Brown: I gathered that.

Mr Klees: The broader we can keep it in terms of giving definition to the purpose of the act, I think the more opportunity the minister has of washing his hands of this and in fact deferring to the board’s decision. The minister does not want to overturn a board’s decision, but the minister has an obligation not to be encumbered with a condition that’s beyond his jurisdiction.

Ms Martel: I don’t think we’re disagreeing with you; we’re disagreeing with whether or not the wording that appears before us does that. The argument we’re making is that if you’re trying to get at a minister’s deciding to overturn a condition because he or she cannot monitor compliance, then let’s say that. If you say the minister can make that decision and determine whether the condition is consistent with the act, my argument is the act is much broader than just the compliance issue, and so the minister has much broader discretion than to overturn an OMB ruling. If what you’re trying to do is capture the examples that you gave us, we’re just trying to find some words that do that in a way that I guess we don’t feel does at this point. And whether or not your legal staff can come up with something, I don’t know.

Mr Michael Brown: I think the difficulty we’re having is in the number of discretionary words we see in those last couple of lines. It’s “of the opinion” that something is “consistent with the purposes.” It seems to me there’s a huge amount of discretion in the interpretation of those.

If we’re saying that you shouldn’t impose a condition that can’t be enforced by the minister and is not under his or her jurisdiction, I agree with that. I’m just not sure. This seems really broad, Mr Klees.

Mr Klees: Could I direct you to part I, which clearly states the purposes of the act? I’ll just take a minute here and read for you:

“(a) To provide for the management of the aggregate resources of Ontario;

“(b) to control and regulate aggregate operations on crown and private lands;

“(c) to require the rehabilitation of land from which aggregate has been excavated; and

“(d) to minimize adverse impact on the environment in respect of aggregate operations.”

Certainly we feel that is a fairly all-encompassing purpose and definition of where the minister would have jurisdiction. I have to say that we clearly don’t want to be placed in a situation where we’re brought into play in private agreements, development agreements to which the ministry is not party, and I think what you and our constituencies need to be assured of is that we are looking after the public interest within the jurisdiction of the purpose of this act, and we clearly are saying that.

The Vice-Chair: Considerable discussion has been had. I’d like to put the question then on this government motion. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion carried.

The next Liberal and NDP motions are out of order. We move on to section 8, paragraph 3, which is a Liberal motion.

Mr Michael Brown: Which one?

The Vice-Chair: Section 8 of the bill, paragraph 3 of subsection 11(8) of the act.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that paragraph 3 of subsection 11(8) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 8 of the bill, be struck out.

Unfortunately I’m not sure this is exactly the way I want to do that. I think we’ll just withdraw that.

Mr Klees: I was wondering about that one.

Mr Michael Brown: There probably was a good reason. I’m just not sure what it was.

The Vice-Chair: The motion is withdrawn. Next is another Liberal motion, which deals with subsection 11(14). I think that’s connected with the previous motion.

Mr Michael Brown: I believe it is too. We won’t put it.

The Vice-Chair: Therefore you withdraw that also.

Mr Michael Brown: Nor 11(15), I don’t think.

The Vice-Chair: Okay, so we’ll withdraw that one and move to the next one, which is another Liberal motion, on 11(15).

1650

Mr Michael Brown: No.

The Vice-Chair: It’s withdrawn.

That’s the bulk of the proposed amendments to section 8. Therefore I shall put the question. Shall section 8, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 8, as amended, carries.

Moving to section 9, the first motion I have is a government motion.

Mr Klees: I move that section 9 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“(3) Section 12 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

"Annual compliance reports

"(2) Despite clause (1)(j), the minister or the board shall not have regard to a contravention of this act or the regulations that was disclosed by the applicant in an annual compliance report under section 15.1 or 40.1, if the applicant complied with clause 15.1(4)(a) or clause 40.1(4)(a), as the case may be, in respect of the contravention."

It's proposed to add this subsection to clarify that instances of non-compliance identified in the annual report which have been remedied cannot be considered in examining the applicant's history of compliance. It's also addressing the issue of self-incrimination.

We feel it's important that while we're placing the onus on the operator to complete the compliance report, during the period of time that the operator is addressing the remedy the information being provided voluntarily can't be used against the operator by a third party so that they're not subject to charges being laid by a third party.

Ms Martel: I'd like to ask the parliamentary assistant — I could accept that in the case where we are moving to a new system, so for the first time, as we've heard from many operators, they are finding out what's in the report, learning how to work with it — what do you do in the circumstance, though, where you have a repeat offender? At a certain point someone who has gone through the training and is managing their site and knows what to look for is, because you have to do this on an annual basis, submitting reports that are continually showing things out of compliance. What do you do to get at that issue? Under this section they would see there is obviously no penalty.

Mr Klees: Let's keep in mind the objective of a compliance report: that the remedy is done and that the operation is brought into compliance. The condition we have in place here is that if within the prescribed time frame the remedy isn't accomplished, the licence is automatically suspended. I think if nothing else, if there are repeat offenders, what we're achieving here is that at least once a year we know they will be brought into compliance, which is something we don't have happening now.

Ms Martel: Is my reading of it incorrect then? If the minister is going to look at issuing a new licence, for example, on another site, are we not going to be able to take into account what the compliance rate has been on a different site of the same proponent? They can continue to be out of compliance and get themselves into compliance only to get a licence back or to narrowly come under the wire of losing a licence. Why do you want to have a similar problem with a licensee on another site?

Mr Klees: I stand to be corrected by staff if I'm not on the mark here, but the compliance report applies to the sites that are licensed. If you have a secondary site that has a separate licence, we deal with each licensed facility or each licensed site separately. The objective, as I said, is that we bring all our sites into compliance.

This will ensure that at least once a year we have a read on that. If they're not in compliance their licence is suspended. We feel we're introducing something that will be very effective, because we don't have that kind of hammer now within the industry. Regardless of how

many times our inspectors might be on site, we don't have the same hammer that this would provide us with.

Ms Martel: But you could revoke a licence now if they were out of compliance, if an inspector went on to the site. The ministry has that authority now.

Mr Pichette: If I may, this is a consideration that's been added to section 12 of the current act that the past compliance history is now of consideration in decisions to issue or not issue a licence. What we're trying to accomplish here is that through compliance reporting there is provision for, effectively, self-incrimination. You are identifying your own violations and correcting those violations.

We don't want that to be used in terms of the history of this section, because identifying your violations and correcting them are in complete compliance with the act. The simple thing of a fence falling down and correcting it could be used against them in the future as a non-compliance issue, when in fact they were able to address it in a fairly timely manner through the compliance report.

Mr Klees: I think your concern about the track record is something that will be caught in the fact that we now will be taking into consideration the track record when it comes to issuing a new licence.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? I will put the question on this amendment. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the amendment carried.

The next motion is a Liberal motion.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that section 9 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(3) Section 12 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

"Compliance history before OMB

"(2) Clause 12(j) applies to the board only if the minister refused to issue the licence under subsection 11(9) on the grounds that the refusal was justified by the applicant's history of compliance with this act and the regulations."

The reason we're putting this forward is that while we understand that a compliance record is an important decision and should be taken into consideration by the minister, if the minister is not giving that as a reason for denying a licence, we wonder why the OMB should be in a position to consider that. It's just to scope the hearing in some way. I think it helps the government to achieve what they're trying to achieve.

Mr Klees: This is the first time I've seen this amendment. It wasn't in my package. I don't know where it came from. I would ask, in order to do it justice, if we could stand this down and perhaps come back to it. I'd like to have an opportunity to discuss this with staff.

Mr Michael Brown: Agreed. That's fair.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Brown agrees to stand down this motion for the time being. We won't vote on section 9 until we've dealt with that. We'll move along to section 10, where the next amendment is to be put forward by the government.

Mr Klees: I move that 12.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 10 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Zoning bylaws

"12.1(1) No licence shall be issued unless the location of the site complies with all relevant zoning bylaws.

"If compliance in doubt

"(2) If the minister is in doubt as to whether the location of the site complies with a zoning bylaw, he or she may serve on the applicant a notice to that effect.

"Application to court

"(3) An applicant who is served with notice is entitled, within 30 days after being served, to make an application to the Ontario Court (General Division) for a judgement declaring that the location of the site complies with the zoning bylaw."

1700

The Vice-Chair: Before explanation, the following motion of Ms Martel is similar yet different. You can choose to amend.

Ms Martel: That's what I'm just trying to figure out. I have, on the one hand, added "official plans." I did that based on the brief that we got from the region of Niagara. They in their brief expressed some concerns that older zoning bylaws might not be in conformity with new updated official plans. That's why I added "official plans" to my amendment, but I'm not sure if that's acceptable to the parliamentary assistant. I have a question about one other piece of yours to know whether or not we can have an amendment here that will work for all of us. Perhaps you can give an explanation as to your changes. That's why I've added "official plans" to mine.

Mr Klees: The motion replaces "site" with the words "location of the site." This wording clarifies the intent and reinstates similar wording that existed under the Pits and Quarries Control Act. The addition of the word "location" prevents a contradiction between section 66 of the act and subsection 13(5) or the new section 12.1.

The province shouldn't be placed into a position of dealing with matters that are a municipal jurisdiction. It's very important that we retain the position of the province and the act as an override to any circumstances where there may be a conflict with a municipal official plan.

You make the point that there are or may be circumstances where the zoning bylaws are in conflict with an official plan. The licence is issued based on zoning bylaws and it is not up to the province to adjudicate those matters at the municipal level. That's clearly the responsibility of the municipality. We feel it's imperative that we retain the provincial interest and that licences are then issued based on the act itself and the provincial interest.

Mr Michael Brown: All this is really doing is confirming that the zoning for that particular location is appropriate and is what the applicant says it is. Am I understanding this?

Mr Klees: Yes.

Ms Martel: What happens in the event, though, that the end result of issuing the licence is that you have new aggregate extraction which will then be permitted in appropriate areas that were not envisioned in the official plan? Are you saying that's the municipality's problem at that point, not the province's?

Mr Klees: We're saying that the zoning bylaws are going to determine the licensing. If there is a conflict with the official plan and the zoning bylaws, that is

beyond our jurisdiction, that's an issue that has to be dealt with at the municipal level.

Mr Michael Brown: That may end up before the OMB.

Mr Klees: It may well. There are recourses there.

The Vice-Chair: I'll put the question then: Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

We'll withdraw the next NDP motion. Seeing no further motions to amend section 10 of the bill, I'll put the question: Shall section 10 of the bill, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare section 10, as amended, carried.

Section 11 of the bill. There's a Liberal motion to amend.

Mr Michael Brown: Do you want to give me just one second?

The Vice-Chair: Sure.

Clerk of the Committee: Sorry. An NDP motion, clause 13(3)(b), should precede that and then an NDP motion, subsections 13(5), (6), (7) and (8), should precede it, and then come back to that.

The Vice-Chair: All right, Mr Brown, you have a few minutes more to think about that one because we first have to entertain the NDP motion dealing with clause 13(3)(b).

Ms Martel: I move that clause 13(3)(b) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 11 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(b) on the clerk of each regional municipality, county and local municipality in which the site is located."

By way of explanation, my reading of the act that is currently in place is that when a minister issues a licence or at any time wants to add a condition or vary the condition of a licence, the licensee and an affected municipality are automatically served with notice. My amendment would make it clear that the minister's discretion to serve notice on the municipality is not permissible, that in fact, as occurs now, the minister would serve notice for his reasons of a change in the condition of a licence on both the licensee and the affected municipality.

Mr Klees: By way of clarification, it's my understanding that it is not a matter of course now. There is discretion as a matter of policy by the ministry and these matters are broken into major and minor variances. If it's considered a major variance, then yes, there is a formal service as a matter of course, but in the course of any given week there are numerous minor variances that are dealt with on an administrative basis and are not necessarily served.

What we want to avoid here is to lock the ministry into having to serve on all variances. We want to retain the discretion and continue to carry on as the ministry has been doing now. There's no change from the current practice. To incorporate this amendment would, in our view, place undue administrative burden on the ministry.

Ms Martel: Can I just be clear? Do you automatically, though, in every case already serve notice on the licensee regardless if it's a major or minor variance?

Mr Klees: I'll defer to staff on that. I believe so, yes.

Ms Martel: If you're doing that with respect to a licensee regardless of whether the issue is major or

minor, why would you not let the affected municipality know? The licensee is getting it regardless, right?

Mr Klees: The licensee is party to the variance and so it follows that they would be served notice. What we're saying is that to burden the system with these additional services would be very cumbersome. It will be done as a matter of course for major issues, but what we're suggesting is that we wouldn't want to tie ourselves to doing that for very minor issues. Again from discussions with staff, quite a few of these things are oftentimes housekeeping. As you're aware, an operation like this is dynamic — in other words, it's constantly in motion — and there are always small variances that have to be registered.

1710

Mr Michael Brown: I have a question, and this is a typically northern question: What happens if this is in an unorganized township? Who is the notice served on? Anybody?

Mr Klees: I'll defer to staff on that.

Mr Pichette: In an unorganized township, the crown plays the role of the municipality, I believe, so it would be basically serving upon itself. If there is no municipality, we cannot serve.

Mr Michael Brown: Wouldn't it be served to a local roads board or a local services board?

Mr Pichette: Yes, that would be considered the local municipality, but in a totally unorganized township I guess you'd have —

Mr Michael Brown: They're not municipalities.

Mr Pichette: Let me ask this question: Are you dealing with crown land or private land?

Mr Michael Brown: It could be either.

Mr Pichette: In a lot of cases with crown land there is no municipality.

Mr Michael Brown: But there are many unorganized townships. I have some that are virtually all private; I have some that are virtually all crown; I have some in the constituency that would be a mixture of both. There are local roads boards. There are local services boards. In the case of a local services board, it is administered with the help of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, not MNR. I wonder how it's addressed in those areas, seeing as we just had a discussion this morning about designations. It could be that some of these townships will be designated.

For various reasons, some unorganized municipalities in the north actually have quite a few people in them. It's just a quirk of time, I guess, that they're the way they are, at least at present. I wonder how the ministry intends to deal with those.

Mr Klees: So your question effectively is: What is the current practice? Who are we serving in unorganized townships? Do we know?

Mr Pichette: If it's a significant issue, we try to notify everybody in that township, either through a local roads board or services board or through our own publications. It's a determination on the importance of the amendment that will dictate how far we outreach. That's our practice.

Mr Klees: Would you like to be served yourself?

Mr Michael Brown: Heck, no. It's just that the act doesn't spell it out. So what you're telling me is that this is how it's done in practice.

Mr Pichette: Specifically on crown land, the act does not spell out notification to the municipality, because it's a jurisdictional issue. But as a matter of practice, we still notify the municipality.

Mr Michael Brown: Or what would be the municipality. Okay.

The Vice-Chair: Seeing no further discussion on Ms Martel's motion, I will put the question: Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion lost.

The next motion is also Ms Martel's.

Ms Martel: I move that section 13 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 11 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Refusal to change conditions

"(12) Subsections (3), (6), (7), (8), (9) and (10) apply, with necessary modifications, if the minister refuses a licensee's request to add a condition to the licence after its issue or to rescind or vary a condition of the licence."

The Vice-Chair: Okay now, I think we're going to have to back up again because we have a motion, 13(5), (6), (8) and (11), which should come before 13(12).

Ms Martel: I move that subsections 13(5), (6), (8) and (11) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 11 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Exception

"(5) The minister may take the proposed action before the 30 days have elapsed if comments have been received from all persons notified and if all persons notified waive the right under subsection (6) to require a hearing.

"Entitlement to hearing

"(6) A person who is served with a notice under subsection (3) is entitled to a hearing by the board if the person, within 30 days after being served, serves the minister with a notice that a hearing is required.

"Parties

"(8) The parties to a hearing are the licensee, any other persons who required the hearing, the minister and such other persons as are specified by the board.

"Where no hearing

"(11) If no hearing is required under subsection (6), the minister may carry out the proposal."

The Vice-Chair: Before I ask for an explanation, is everyone all right? I know we've had trouble with the order of these. Thank you. Go ahead, Ms Martel.

Ms Martel: The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that the same rights that the licensee would have under section 14 will also be provided to any other person who might want to object to the changes in the licence. As I read the section that's set out by the ministry now, a licensee can take several forms of action if he or she disagrees with a varying condition of the licence, as set out by the minister, but I did not see where an individual, a resident in a municipality, for an example, could also follow the same process if he or she disagreed with the variance that the minister was making. So it's allowing for not only the licensee to be party to a process of agreeing or disagreeing with the minister's change or varying of a condition, but also affected land owners or affected municipalities.

Mr Klees: I'll give you my response to this. What we're trying to achieve here is to ensure that we don't

end up in appeal after appeal after appeal. We're trying to discourage this process by suggesting that once the minister has made his or her decision about a variance, that decision be final. By opening it up, what we're concerned about is that once an application's made, the minister makes the decision to either allow the variance or not, that decision will be made based on technical advice from staff, and ultimately it's the minister's responsibility to make that decision as to whether or not to grant that variance. The buck stops with the minister. To open this process up for further appeal, we just feel, is going to create a very cumbersome process that we're not interested in getting involved in.

Ms Martel: Perhaps my read of the section is wrong. I don't read this as the buck stops with the minister; I read that the licensee, if he or she disagrees with the minister's ruling, can appeal that to the OMB. So my argument is, then, if you allow a licensee to have that right, why would you not also allow an affected municipality or affected land owners who may well disagree with the minister's decision in granting the licence in the first place — what right of appeal do they have or why is their right of appeal different from the licensee's right of appeal?

Mr Klees: Once an appeal is made to the OMB, anyone can become party to that process. What we're suggesting is that as long as the appeal is made to the minister and the minister has made his decision, we don't want further process at that point. If the licensee isn't satisfied with the minister's response, clearly there are other avenues that the licensee can take up. Anyone who has an interest can then participate in that.

Ms Martel: But the people who have an interest in that wouldn't, as I read it, get the benefit of the same rights of notification, the same rights of serving the minister with a notice that a hearing is required. Why would you have two distinct processes for it?

Mr Klees: Keep in context that what we're talking about here are variances once the licence has been issued. All of the parties that have an interest in the initial issuing of the licences are privy to that process at the front end. So the licence is issued with all of the terms and conditions tied to it. What we're talking about here now is, once the licence has been issued, the licensee comes forward and makes an application for one of those conditions to be varied. The minister then has the responsibility to either agree to or deny that application. It's strictly a technical matter that's being dealt with by the minister at that point. The minister has the responsibility to uphold the terms and the framework within which that licence was initially offered and will not in his or her wisdom vary from that.

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Where some of these variances come into play are on temporary matters that quite frankly are not going to be material to the terms and conditions under which that original licence was issued. There are occasions sometimes when perhaps for a short period of time — there may be a short-term contract, for example, when a special appeal is made to allow for a minor variance that is not going to override the original premise of the licence being issued. That discretion is within the minister.

Ms Martel: Let me give you this example. What if the minister varies the terms of the licence? The original licence had set operating hours that appeared in the terms of the licence. The licensee, for whatever reason, goes to the minister and indicates that for business reasons or for a project that he's working on he wants the hours of operation removed to be able to bring the aggregate out for a substantial period of time, 24 hours a day. You've got homeowners who disagree with that change in condition, for very legitimate reasons. Why are they not permitted to make their case to the minister in the same way as a licensee would if he or she disagreed? In that case, surely they have some right to disagree; for whatever technical reason, the minister may have already granted those hours of operation to be waived or be dismissed.

Mr Klees: In the real world, that wouldn't happen. In the real world, that kind of substantive variance would simply not be granted by the minister. Where there would be a variance would be on a very short-term basis for a circumstance that is again, as I say, typically — my information that I have from staff is that these are typically short-term in nature and very minor and would not impinge on the original structure of the licence.

Ms Martel: Here's the problem I have. We just had a case in our office where the licence was granted and there are no hours of operation listed in the licence. It's a 24-hour operation. It's in an unorganized area and the residents have come to see me because they do not believe that that pit should be allowed to operate 24 hours a day. And that was with the granting of the licence. We're not even talking about a variance. It's totally unrestricted. So these folks are going to end up at the OMB. All I'm saying is, I've had it happen with a licence, never mind a variance.

Mr Klees: I'm not familiar with that particular circumstance. Perhaps I'll let staff speak to that and maybe we can flesh some of this out.

Mr Pichette: In that particular case it was obviously not identified as an impact through the licensing process that hours of operation would have to be identified to eliminate or significantly reduce a social or environmental impact. So as a result, the licence was issued. It was never addressed or not brought up through the process. Perhaps now it's seen as a significant impact and can be shown that it is an impact, in which case, the citizens, the ratepayers, would approach the minister and make their case to the minister. If the minister says this is an addition to a condition we should introduce, then the minister would make that proposal, consider it significant, serve upon the municipality and particularly the licensee. In other words, the minister's doing it to the licensee here. Only in cases where the minister there, after the 30-day comment period, would then move on it, but during that 30 days the licensee has an opportunity to refer the matter to the board. That's how that works. That's the only way it works, actually.

Ms Martel: I guess my problem is you're not responding to my concern, which is the minister won't do those kinds of things; even in the original granting of the licence, that's what took place. So when you've got what I would call a major variance, in that case hours of

operation being waived, it would seem to me to be a major variance if there are neighbours in close proximity. How do these folks have an opportunity to disagree with that, and why, if I'm reading this correctly, is the way they disagree different than the rights a licensee would have to disagree?

Mr Pichette: I would say that it's not a waiving of the operations. There is no requirement that there shall be hours of operation. It is only used when there is clearly an impact that can be mitigated by introducing hours of operation. The biggest example, of course, is in cottage country, operations not being on weekends because of maybe the noise issues. Clearly, it was not identified as an impact through the process; perhaps it isn't an impact. But the remedy that the ratepayers would have here is to approach the minister with the case that it is an impact and needs to be introduced as a condition. At that time, through the process of notification of both the municipality and the licensee, the licensee has the opportunity to appeal the minister's decision and refer the matter to the board.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Not seeing any, I will put the question. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the motion lost.

The next motion, to amend section 11, is also from the third party, Ms Martel. It's identical to the next Liberal motion and the NDP one came in first, so you lose that battle, Mr Brown.

Ms Martel: I move that section 13 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 11 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Refusal to change conditions

"(12) Subsections (3), (6), (7), (8), (9) and (10) apply, with necessary modifications, if the minister refuses a licensee's request to add a condition to the licence after its issue or to rescind or vary a condition of the licence."

The change here would make it clear that the licensee would have the method of appeal that appears through this section if he or she disagrees with the proposal that the minister is putting forward, ie, the changes to the condition of the licence.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion on this?

Mr Klees: Our comment is that again, we believe that the minister should bring closure to these appeals. The minister will base his or her decision on facts available to him or her, and to perpetuate appeals we don't believe would be in the public interest.

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The Vice-Chair: Further discussion? Seeing no further discussion, I'll put the question. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is lost.

Mr Brown's motion is out of order, as it's identical to the previous one.

Therefore, I will put the question on section 11.

Mr Michael Brown: Don't we have —

The Vice-Chair: We just had that one motion from the opposition party on section 11, so I'll put the question. Shall section 11 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 11 carries.

Next, on section 12 we have several motions to amend, starting with the NDP motion amending section 15.1.

Ms Martel: I move that section 15.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 12 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Copy for municipality

"(1.1) The licensee shall give a copy of the report to the clerk of each regional municipality, county and local municipality in which the site is located.

"Ministry review

"(1.2) The minister shall give a copy of any review of the report that is prepared by the ministry to each regional municipality, county and local municipality in which the site is located."

The reason for the amendment is as follows: It's very clear that this section replaces what used to be an annual ministry inspection of each of these sites to determine compliance. There's been a great deal said about all of that. Given the fact that we are asking the public to take a leap of faith and put their trust in what the annual compliance report will show, and hopefully it will show that people are operating in compliance, I think it's only fair then that the municipality should be afforded the opportunity to receive a copy of the compliance report from the licensee so they will know what the status is of that particular site. Under the old act, during the ministry inspection I do believe they would have been asked for their comments as well with respect to the particular operation.

It also makes clear that the municipality will be able to receive the MNR review of that particular report so they will understand whether or not the MNR is going to be considering taking any action or agrees and feels that the remedial action will take place in the time that has been outlined by the operator.

I'm moving this because we heard from a number of people who came forward who strongly disagreed with the change that is being made to have operators self-regulate, and I'm looking for some ways and means to ensure that there will be accountability and that the public will have some comfort in what is actually happening under this new process.

Mr Klees: With regard to (1.1), we're in agreement that this should be done. However, it was our intent to do this by regulation and I can undertake to assure you that this provision will appear in the regulations.

With regard to (1.2), the problem we have with the reviews being circulated is that often the reviews will contain information of a confidential nature that may well relate to pending prosecution. As a result, it would be inappropriate for that information to be made public and for that reason we couldn't support (1.2). But, as I indicate, (1.1) will be incorporated into regulations.

Ms Martel: If you are setting out the rules surrounding what the licensee shall do, I guess I don't understand what the problem is to incorporate a section in the act directly that says notification will occur to municipalities. You've got notification provisions for licensees. For example, in the section we just finished, you have a provision for notification for municipalities, again at the discretion of the minister, but you do have that in the section we just finished. I'm just not understanding the reason why you'd have to wait and put that into the reg

rather than have it in the act and make it clear that that's going to occur.

Mr Klees: Ms Martel, I'm prepared to accept your amendment and to include this in legislation —

Ms Martel: Thank you. Oh, wait a minute.

Mr Klees: — as long as you're prepared to withdraw (1.2).

Ms Martel: All I want to know is, is it the exception rather than the rule that a report issued by the ministry would have something of a confidential nature that involved a prosecution? Is that what the nature of the reports are that you expect will come from reviewing people's compliance reports?

Mr Klees: Staff have advised me that it is the rule, typically, that the reviews would contain information that they would feel very uncomfortable about disclosing publicly. You drive a hard bargain, Ms Martel. I offer (1.1) if you withdraw (1.2).

Ms Martel: Let me think.

Mr Klees: Otherwise, we'll throw it into regulation.

Ms Martel: I'll accept it. I just want to say that you have to understand, whether or not this works is going to be very much based on the public's confidence with the whole system.

Mr Klees: We agree with that.

Ms Martel: What I'm trying to do is make sure that the people who are going to be affected, whether they be municipalities or environmental groups or land owners, get that sense of comfort. Otherwise, no matter what the industry does, it's just not going to work and the ministry will be no better off at the end of the day because of that.

The Vice-Chair: Ms Martel, does that mean you'd like to entertain the bargain that was struck? In order to do that, you'd have to withdraw everything from "which the site is located."

Ms Martel: Do you want me to read it into the record again, then, Mr Chair, with the change?

The Vice-Chair: Just say that you would like to delete all the words after "which the site is located."

Ms Martel: Mr Chair, I would like to delete the subsection that begins, "Ministry review," subsection (1.2), "The minister shall give a copy of any review..."

The Vice-Chair: Do all members of the committee follow that, then, that everything from "Ministry review" inclusive downwards is withdrawn? Any further discussion on that motion? Seeing none, I'll put the question. Shall the amendment, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the amendment, as amended, carried.

The next motion to discuss is a government motion on 15.1(4).

Mr Klees: I move that section 15.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 12 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Disclosure of contravention

"(4) If an annual compliance report discloses a contravention of this act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the licence,

"(a) the licensee shall,

"(i) within a period of 90 days after the report is submitted to the minister or within such longer period as

may be specified by the minister, take such steps as may be necessary to remedy the contravention, and

"(ii) immediately stop the doing of any act that forms part of the contravention; and

"(b) if the licensee complies with subclause (a)(ii), no prosecution shall be commenced in respect of the contravention, and no notice may be served by the minister under section 20 or 22 in respect of the contravention,

"(i) during the period described in subclause (a)(i), or

"(ii) after the period described in subclause (a)(i), if the licensee complies with subclause (a)(i) within that period."

I'd like to point out that —

The Vice-Chair: One moment, please, Mr Klees. While reading the amendment, in part (4)(a)(i), the second-last line, the word that I have on the motion is "stop" and I believe you used the word "remedy" there.

Mr Klees: I did, and I wanted to alert you to the fact that I did make that change. That was a typographical error.

The Vice-Chair: Does everyone have that change, (4)(a)(i), the word "stop" has been changed to "remedy"?

Mr Klees: Do you want an explanation of the amendment?

Mr Klees: This is to require the immediate cessation of any prohibited activity that's identified in the annual compliance report and to confer a period of immunity from prosecution while a contravention is being remedied. It gets back to the principle of self-incrimination that we had some discussion about earlier. I think it's important that we give the confidence to the industry who are participating in this self-compliance that while they make their report, they recognize they will have a reasonable period of time within which to bring their operations into compliance and in light of the fact that the compliance reports will be of a public nature, it's very possible for a third party to step to the plate and bring charges. We want to ensure that that doesn't happen, that there is that reasonable period of time for compliance.

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The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion?

Mr Michael Brown: I understand the reason for this and I'm in sympathy with the reason for this. I do, however, have some difficulty, and perhaps it's just conceptual, that when we use the hours-of-operation thought, where someone is not complying with the stipulation of hours of operation, do we really want to give them 90 days before they have to comply?

Mr Klees: They have to stop immediately from the time the non-compliance is noted. If you take a look at (4)(a)(ii), "the licensee shall...immediately stop the doing of any act that forms part of the contravention," so while we're in that period of time, there's an onus on the operator to cease any contravention of the licence.

Mr Michael Brown: So what you're really concerned about with the 90 days is something physical in nature that you would have to — okay.

Ms Martel: Would that 90 days kick in after the date that was set on the report which indicates that remedial action will have taken place? What I'm trying to get at is, you're going to have people sending in reports and they will indicate, "I'm going to be able to get my fence up a

month from now." Are we talking about a 90-day grace period after the date that they've indicated they will be in compliance or is that from the day the report lands on your desk?

Mr Klees: It's from the day the report is submitted.

The Vice-Chair: Any further discussion? Ms Martel, I'll just alert you to the fact that your next amendment would be out of order if this carries. Seeing no further discussion, I'll put the question. Shall the amended amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the amended amendment carried.

The next amendment proposed by the NDP is out of order as it would conflict with the one the committee just approved. So we move to a Liberal motion, which is similarly out of order for the same reason.

Mr Michael Brown: Which one is that?

The Vice-Chair: Your section 12 of the bill, subsections 15.1(4) and (5) of the act.

Mr Michael Brown: I don't believe it would be out of order.

The Vice-Chair: Okay, that's fine. Go ahead, Mr Brown, and read that.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that section 15.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 12 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Suspension of licence

"(4) A licence may be deemed to have been suspended if,

"(a) the licensee fails to submit an annual compliance report in accordance with this section;

"(b) the licensee submits an annual compliance report that contains false information; or

"(c) the licensee's annual compliance report discloses a contravention of this act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the licence and the licensee fails to take such steps as are necessary to stop the contravention within the period specified in the report.

"Reinstatement of licence

"(5) A licence that is deemed to have been suspended under subsection (4) shall be deemed to have been reinstated if, as the case may be,

"(a) the licensee submits the annual compliance report to the minister;

"(b) the licensee corrects the false information that was contained in the annual compliance report; or

"(c) the licensee takes such steps as are necessary to stop the contravention that was disclosed in the annual compliance report."

The main issue we have here is the reinstatement of the licence, that if you've taken the corrective measures, the licence will be reinstated at the earliest possible moment. I believe that's consistent with what you're trying to achieve. It's my experience that occasionally this does not happen for logistical reasons within any enforcement agency. That's what we are trying to correct or to ensure on behalf of everyone, that if the operator is in compliance, the operator can operate. I think it's rather simple but it can cost people a huge amount of money and a lot of time and a lot of grief if the ministry, for whatever reason, cannot logistically come out and verify that this in fact is happening.

Ms Martel: I believe that our amendments are the same. I want to speak to the top section, though. Clearly, during the course of the public hearings, the producers themselves told the committee that the penalties for non-compliance around the issue of the report should be made very clear and very transparent to people. Even though I tried going through the act to sort out where and when the occasion would warrant a suspension of a licence, I didn't find that it was clear enough to say that the following three conditions, if they are not met, will result in an immediate suspension of the licence.

So you'll notice that the three areas that we have highlighted actually came from the aggregate producers' presentations. You could say that we're moving it forward on their behalf. We want to make it clear, and I think that they do, for the public as much as anyone else, that the operators are serious about this obligation. Anyone who is undermining in any way, shape or form the annual compliance report is going to suffer a very swift and immediate penalty, which will be suspension of the licence. So part of the reason I moved it was to make very clear that the penalty was very transparent to everyone and the reasons for a suspension being imposed were very clear to everyone as well.

Mr Klees: We don't disagree in principle with what you're trying to do here at all. I agree that it's central to self-compliance and to this process to work that it's clear there are consequences to not complying. We like what this says; the problem I've got is that we have been advised by legal counsel that they're concerned that there would be difficulty in enforcing this particular amendment the way it's written. I'm taking advice from people who should know these things; I'm not a lawyer. I can tell you that the intent of what you're trying to achieve here is not contrary to what we would like to have happen, but we do have a problem in incorporating something into legislation that we have advice on from legal counsel that it's questionable that it could be enforced.

Ms Martel: Can I ask then, as a matter of clarification, is the difficulty around enforcement with respect to the provisions for the suspension of the licence or the reinstatement of the licence, or is it both?

Mr Klees: I'll ask legal counsel to comment on that.

Ms Lintell: I guess our major concern is the lack of due process and the concept of no notification of a suspension. What we're into is a system of self-sanction to back up a self-assessment of compliance. I guess I'm having some difficulty in grasping the concept and walking it through in terms of the implications. We're all having difficulties in determining exactly —

The Vice-Chair: Excuse me. Can you just lean forward a little bit? Hansard's not picking up.

Ms Lintell: I'm sorry — having some difficulty in attempting to assess how this will aid compliance. On the one hand, one can argue that the fact that there is a deemed suspension where failure to file the compliance report on time — for instance, filing it a day late — automatically puts that operation in suspension and requires the operator to literally lock his gates. It's a pretty frightening sanction.

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What's the upshot? I suppose we would have knowledge in terms of a list of these compliance reports have not been submitted and therefore all of these operations are in suspension. I know I'm not being very clear, but I think it reflects the difficulty that we're having in coming to terms with how effective this will be.

I understand your point with respect to ensuring that the suspension is lifted once there is compliance, but that can be accommodated, I think, without going the step of the deemed suspension on failure to do certain things. I understand also that this is an attempt to remove arbitrariness from the process because there has been an unevenness in the application of sanctions, and I understand that completely. But on the other hand, you're creating another type of arbitrariness in that undue hardship can be created by virtue of not being able to give any relief where there is a reasonable excuse for the one day late. That's a concern.

Also, in analysing this, we've had some difficulty with the false information in the report. Again, is it false due to mistake, was it an intentional effort to mislead, those kinds of things? Again, the imposition of the sanction, which is quite severe. If anything, we would perhaps be prepared to consider stepping away and moving it to a more objective basis. Failure to file the report, failure to carry out the remedy that's identified within the specified period of time: At least those are objective.

We're also thinking in terms of the next step since an operator, for instance, who ignores this and continues to operate while he is deemed to be in suspension as a result of the operation of the statute is then subject to further sanction by way of charges. The difficulty in formulating a charge where there is literally no paper in the sense of evidence and in particular the false information one gives us some particular discomfort in that respect. At least if you fail to file, we can establish that we did not receive it on the 30th; we received it a month late. At least that can be established. Those things are provable. Those are the kinds of considerations that are creating some reservations.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm even more confused than I was before. It seems to me that the backbone of this legislation was strong sanctions for non-compliance and that there was to be no debate about whether a suspension would be issued if there was a contravention. There was to be no debate. So it would seem to me that if the report was a day late, the suspension would be happening immediately. That's why I wasn't, when I discussed it, very concerned about the deemed part because I understood it to be what was going to happen. There is going to be no discretion. Either it's in on the 30th or it isn't. If it isn't, you're suspended.

Mr Klees: Mr Brown, as I indicated, we don't have a disagreement on that. What we're trying to do is find some way to deal with this so that it's effective and enforceable.

Can I make a suggestion? There may be a compromise here. I think the clause that's giving us some problem is 4(b), "the licensee submits an annual compliance report that contains false information." I'd be willing to accept this amendment if you were willing to withdraw that clause. What that would allow us to do is be specific. It would give us (a) and (c), which would then become (b), which are measurable factors that we can enforce, that are tangible. I think it helps us out with the problem that we're facing.

Mr Michael Brown: I appreciate it. I'm quite willing to eliminate (b) in both sections. I presume you also want it eliminated in the section above. How do I do that, Mr Chair, so that we —

The Vice-Chair: Ms Martel — just let her make some comments.

Ms Martel: I could say to the parliamentary assistant that he's making a case as to why he should continue to have ministry inspections, but let me say that that will move us some way and probably give some comfort to both the producers who are concerned about and frankly a lot of the people who are concerned about whether or not this whole process is going to work. So if we can get that far, that would be a step ahead of where we are now. I'll agree to that.

The Vice-Chair: In order to do that, Mr Brown, you have to —

Mr Michael Brown: Shouldn't I just reread it? Wouldn't that be faster?

The Vice-Chair: No, just delete all the words in (4)(b) and (5)(b).

Mr Michael Brown: I will delete from my motion clause 4(b), "the licensee submits an annual compliance report that contains false information; or" and I will delete clause (5)(b), "the licensee corrects the false information that was contained in the annual compliance report; or." The renumbering I guess happens automatically.

The Vice-Chair: Yes. Any further discussion on this? Seeing none, I will put the question. Shall the amendment, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the amendment carried.

That wraps up section 12, so I would like to ask, shall section 12, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare section 12, as amended, carried.

Seeing as it's 6 o'clock, we will now adjourn until Thursday at 10 am.

The committee adjourned at 1757.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

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Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin L) for Mr Grandmaître
Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock PC) for Mr Carroll
Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie PC) for Mr Hardeman
Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East / -Est ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand PC) for Mr Stewart

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Hon Chris Hodgson, Minister of Natural Resources
Mr Ray Pichette, manager, program development, non-renewable resources,
Ministry of Natural Resources
Ms Krystine Linttell, solicitor, legal services branch,
Ministry of Natural Resources

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 24 octobre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Aggregate and
Petroleum Resources
Statute Law
Amendment Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 modifiant des lois
en ce qui concerne
les ressources en agrégats
et les richesses pétrolières



Chair: Jack Carroll
Clerk: Lynn Mellor

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 24 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 24 octobre 1996

*The committee met at 1006 in committee room 1.*AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS
ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Consideration of Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning. Welcome to the continuing deliberations on clause-by-clause analysis of Bill 52. I thank Mr Maves for filling in for me last Thursday.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I was glad to.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I knew it went smoothly.

The Chair: He obviously accomplished a lot more on Thursday afternoon than I did on Thursday morning, so we'll see how it goes.

Just to go back and pick up something he didn't do, that was to carry section 9. I understand there is an amendment to section 9 that we have to deal with.

Mr Michael Brown: Just one second, Mr Chair. As much as I want to proceed rapidly, I must point out that the critic isn't here for the New Democrats.

The Chair: Was Shelley discussing that amendment when a decision was made to stand it down?

Mr Michael Brown: Oh, that one? Okay. You're talking about the stood-down amendment.

The Chair: Right.

Mr Michael Brown: Perfect. We've had a short discussion of this. Our objective here was just to make sure that the applicant's history would only be taken into account if in fact that was the minister's reason for turning down an application at an OMB hearing. I think it's fairly straight-forward.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): We had actually asked to stand this down because we wanted to have a chance to give due consideration to the point Mr Brown was making. After much deliberation, I have to advise Mr Brown that the government cannot support this amendment. We really do feel that it would preclude the board

from considering all of the relevant compliance history that may be necessary for the board to consider to make its decision. For that reason, we will not be supporting this amendment.

Mr Michael Brown: Could I ask the parliamentary assistant, given that there are already sections within the bill that provide for some scoping of the OMB consideration, could he envision at any point that the scoping would preclude something like — one of the issues here is that all of us, regardless of who you might be and which side of the table you might be on in a particular issue surrounding aggregates, know that when it goes to the OMB the hearings can sometimes move off into areas that at least some people might believe to be frivolous. The scoping was, as I understood it, to keep it to the issue at hand.

Mr Klees: Precisely.

Mr Michael Brown: So if the issue of compliance were not a problem in the ministry's view, would it be scoped out? In the scoping, is it conceivable this would be one of the things that was not to be considered by the OMB?

Mr Klees: Mr Brown, I don't envision scoping to preclude or to dictate to the board what evidence the board might want to consider in making a decision. I agree with you that the intent of scoping is to narrow the focus, to avoid frivolous considerations and to ensure that the board deals only with those issues that have not already been dealt with, but I do think it would be inappropriate, and the government feels it would be inappropriate, for the preclusion of any evidence that might be relevant to the consideration of the issue before the board. For that reason, as I say, we will not be supporting this motion.

The Chair: We'll vote on the amendment first. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The amendment is defeated.

No further amendments to section 9. Shall section 9 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 9 is carried.

I understand the government would like to go back and open up section 12, which was carried as amended. We need all-party approval to go back and open up a section that has already been carried.

Mr Michael Brown: I ask for unanimous consent that we reopen that section.

The Chair: Ms Martel, I'm kind of catching you cold on this one.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Sorry that I got here late. Can I ask why, just before I agree? Are you going to change something else here?

Mr Klees: Ms Martel, I was hoping to have an opportunity to discuss this section with you before the

committee started. The reason is simply a drafting issue. In principle we have agreed of course to the amendment that was proposed by you, with a couple of changes if you recall; there were a couple of amendments that we made. Legislative counsel advised us that in light of those changes, in light of the amendments that we have made and in light of the fact that we've accepted your amendment, there need to be some clarifications in terms of referencing some other parts of the bill. I think you'll find it is strictly a legislative drafting issue.

Ms Martel: Can I just get from you, Mr Chair, exactly what section. Section 12?

The Chair: Section 12, the last one that was carried before we adjourned on Thursday afternoon.

Ms Martel: Is that in the new package we received this morning?

The Chair: Yes, it is, the second one down.

Ms Martel: The second one in? Is it section 12, subsection (2), clause 12(j)?

Mr Klees: Subsections 15.1(5), (6) and (7).

Mr Michael Brown: Could I suggest, Mr Chair, that we take a couple of minutes' recess and perhaps have that conversation you need to have, Mr Klees?

The Chair: Ms Martel, would you prefer that we —

Ms Martel: I've got it. It's okay, thanks, Mr Chair.

Mr Klees: In light of the fact that this is a drafting issue, it might be appropriate if I have counsel speak to this and provide the rationale for the —

The Chair: The first thing we need is consent to reopen this section.

Ms Martel: Yes.

The Chair: Mr Klees, if we could have counsel explain, it might help.

Ms Krystine Lintell: The reason for the redraft: One, I point out that the initial motion referred to subsection (4), and that's been corrected, because the correct subsection is (5). The initial motion, you will recall, also provided for a suspension on the basis of the submission of false information and we agreed that would be deleted, so that has been reflected.

On the other changes, I'll refer you back to section 12, subsection 15.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, which actually talks about disclosure of the contravention and specifically refers to the requirement to remedy the contravention within a period of time and the requirement to immediately stop any act that forms the contravention.

What has happened is that this section has been redrafted. Specifically, rather than simply stating that the licence will be reinstated when the licensee takes such steps as are necessary etc, the clauses are specifically identified to refer back to the previous provision. This is in order to make it consistent so there is no dispute as to any alteration in meaning with respect to the application of the suspension section. Apart from that, the intent and the general substance have not been altered.

The Chair: With that explanation, Mr Klees, maybe we should have you introduce the amendment so that we get it on the floor.

Mr Klees: I move that section 15.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 12 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Suspension of licence

"(5) A licence shall be deemed to have been suspended if,

"(a) the licensee fails to submit an annual compliance report in accordance with this section; or

"(b) the licensee's annual compliance report discloses a contravention of this act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the licence and the licensee fails to comply with subclause(4)(a)(i) or (ii).

"Reinstatement; failure to submit

"(6) A licence that was deemed to have been suspended under clause (5)(a) shall be deemed to be reinstated if the licensee submits the annual compliance report to the minister.

"Reinstatement; failure to comply with clause (4)(a).

"(7) A licence that was deemed to have been suspended under clause (5)(b) shall be deemed to be reinstated if the licensee,

"(a) takes such steps as are necessary to remedy the contravention that was disclosed in the annual compliance report, if the licensee failed to comply with subclause (4)(a)(i); or

"(b) stops the doing of the act that formed part of the contravention, if the licensee failed to comply with subclause (4)(a)(ii)."

Mr Michael Brown: Just quickly, some clarification: I had some actual concern about this wording about the former amendment. We changed another amendment — I'm trying to remember which clause — but what concerns me is that clause 7(b) "stops the doing of the act." I wonder if it's counsel's view that, reading this along with (a), that means remedying the situation entirely; you can stop something but the situation is still there and is a problem. If you have to read both together, that probably addresses my concern. What I'm asking is really kind of a technical question. Does the wording work, because it does seem to me to be a little awkward?

Ms Lintell: Yes. The intention is that both provisions would apply. Basically the distinction between them is that you will have, I suppose, circumstances that are static, the failure to have a fence up, as opposed to the doing of an activity such as excavating within a setback, which continues. So clearly, yes, if it's an activity, it must stop. Since that, once it's stopped, it still represents a contravention and it must be remedied, as the second step.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you.

1020

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): A question to the attorney: Why would we ever use such a phrase or could you explain it to me "stops the doing of an act"? Now either that's bad English or I'm just so stupid I don't understand it. I can't understand that word to be included in an act like this.

Ms Lintell: We were attempting to draw the distinction between, as the point I made previously, a state of affairs that represents a contravention and an activity, the carrying on of an activity that contravenes the conditions of a licence or the site plan or the act. There is a distinction in terms of —

Mr Klees: Could I help? Actually, I think this was incorporated here to make it crystal clear that while the person might be taking some remedy, that categorically

they stop doing what was wrong or what brought it into contravention. Have you got a problem with just the words or the concept?

Mr Stewart: It's probably the wording of it. But I guess my concern is that we've got a lot of very ordinary people reading these acts and we make them so difficult to understand that we're going to have to hire a lawyer. The applicant's going to have to hire a lawyer to interpret this, no disrespect to the —

Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre): Have you got a problem with that?

Mr Stewart: I'm surrounded by them. My apologies for that. I guess I have difficulty with what it means, the doing of an act. That's my concern. I'm not trying to be antagonistic, but I just have real difficulty with some of the wording that we do, for many of us who are just —

The Chair: Further discussion on this amendment proposed by Mr Klees? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Shall section 12, as further amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 12, as further amended, carries.

Ms Martel: I move that clause 16(5)(b) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 13 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(b) on the clerk of each regional municipality, county and local municipality in which the site is located."

This section allows the minister at any time to require a licensee to amend the site plan. My reading of the current act is that the minister must serve notice with respect to that change on both a licensee and a municipality now under the current statute. The change that I want to make reflects that the minister will have to continue to carry out that same activity, ie, if he proposes to make an amendment of a site plan, the licensee is notified and so is any affected regional municipality, county or local municipality which is affected by that particular change. So the discretion that appears in the government's changes is taken out.

Mr Klees: We had some extensive discussion around a similar request on another amendment and Ms Martel will recall that the government was not prepared to support that simply from the standpoint of not wanting to be required to adhere to the administrative complexities that would be involved in very minor changes. It's my understanding that site plan changes particularly have many minor changes that come forward that don't affect the substance of the operation.

I'll restate the fact that as a matter of course, as a matter of practice, the ministry serves on the municipalities when major changes take place. The government is not prepared, for the same reason as the previous discussion, to support this amendment.

Ms Martel: My problem is that it will be the minister who will determine what is major and minor. In my view, what you're doing is taking away a right that a municipality already has, and that is the right of notification with respect to these changes. I don't think, if you're going to try and make this act work, given the changes you're making around self-regulation, it's too much to ask. I think you'll be much better off providing municipalities with information up front on this act, particularly

with the other changes that are being made, rather than removing that obligation. I just think at the end of the day the government will find, for the cost, it would have been far better served to let people know what was going on.

Mr Michael Brown: I want to express our support for the amendment. I'll just leave it at that, for the reasons I've already stated.

The Chair: Any further discussion on the amendment? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment does not carry.

Ms Martel: I move that subsections 16(7), (8), (10) and (13) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 13 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Exception

"(7) The minister may take the proposed action before the 30 days have elapsed if comments have been received from all persons notified and, in the case of a proposal to require the amendment of the site plan, if all persons notified waive the right under subsection (8) to require a hearing.

"Entitlement to a hearing

"(8) A person who is served with notice under subsection (5) of a proposal to require the amendment of a site plan is entitled to a hearing by the board if the person, within 30 days after being served, serves the minister with a notice that a hearing is required.

"Parties

"(10) The parties to the hearing are a licensee, any other person who required the hearing, the minister and such other persons as are specified by the board.

"Where no hearing

"(13) If no hearing is required under subsection (8), the minister may carry out the proposal."

What we are doing in this section is ensuring that not only does a licensee have the opportunity to serve notice to the minister that a hearing is required, but other affected or interested parties will also have the same rights that are now granted to the licensee under this section, particularly allowing them to waive a right of hearing if they want to, not just allowing the licensee to do that. Again, allowing interested parties and not just the licensee to serve notice to the board that a hearing is required extends and makes it clear that they can be a party to a hearing.

What we're trying to do is make sure that people who object to the site plan that's being proposed by the minister also have an opportunity to participate. That opportunity and right, as set out for the licensee, are also set out and made clear for interested parties.

Mr Klees: This is a parallel situation to the discussion we had around the proposed amendment to section 11. The government's position at that time was very clear in that we did not support the proposed amendment.

With regard to this particular amendment, I remind Ms Martel that this deals specifically with site plans, which are internal to the operation and which also are typically of a very technical nature. For the reasons that we stated previously relating to section 11, we feel that this is simply a parallel circumstance and, as a result, the government will not be supporting this amendment.

Ms Martel: I just point out that site plan proposals can be minor; a number of them can be quite major. I related the case we've got in my riding right now of a site plan change that has been proposed that people in an unorganized area are very interested in and very worried about. What we're trying to do is make sure that people who feel they have a right and should have a right, given the nature of the work that's being done here, to become party to a hearing at the board have the same right as the person who is the licensee.

Mr Klees: If I can just clarify, certainly Ms Martel is correct that from time to time there are major changes that take place. In those cases where it does involve a major change, as a matter of course the ministry will then serve notice upon the municipalities and invite comment. I want to provide that assurance that where there are major changes, that action will be taken by the minister.

The Chair: No further discussion on the motion? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is defeated. Any additional amendments?

Mr Michael Brown: We are not going to put our amendment.

The Chair: Okay, that's withdrawn.

Ms Martel: I move that section 16 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 13 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Refusal to permit amendment

"(14) Subsections (5), (8), (9), (10), (11) and (12) apply, with necessary modifications, if the minister refuses a licensee's request to amend the site plan."

In this section, there is no provision for a licensee to get a hearing before the board if the minister refuses an amendment to the site plan as requested by the licensee, so the amendment that we're putting forward would allow the licensee to appeal under that circumstance.

Mr Klees: We had some previous discussions around I think it was an opposition motion put forward both by the Liberals and the NDP at that time referring to section 11, subsection 13(12). The point I made at that time was that we believe that at one point closure has to be brought to this process, and that in the end the responsibility to bring closure is with the minister, who is required to act in the public interest. We just feel that this would perpetuate appeals and we're not prepared to support that.

1030

The Chair: Any further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Any further amendments to section 13? Seeing none, shall section 13 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 13 carries.

Any amendments to section 14? Shall section 14 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 14 carries.

Ms Martel: I move that subsection 18(11) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 15 of the bill, be amended by striking out "the person to whom it was transferred" in the second and third lines and substituting "the minister."

In this case, the amendment is being moved because we want to ensure that the minister will continue to have the obligation and the responsibility to serve a copy of

the licence change to an affected municipality, which is I believe the obligation that the minister now has under the current act. The government proposes to have the licensee make those changes. We feel there is an ongoing obligation of the minister with respect to some of these changes and that the minister should continue to undertake that responsibility to guarantee that a notice of change would go out.

Mr Klees: We do not believe this responsibility should rest with the minister. As with other elements of administration relating to this bill, we have placed the responsibility on the operator and, as part of the cost-savings initiative under this act, we believe it is a reasonable responsibility to place on the operator. In fact, it is a legal requirement that it get done by the proponent. If the proponent fails to do so, they do so at the risk of losing their licence. We feel it is an act that will be carried out responsibly by the proponent, and we will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms Martel: I have a question. Is it clear then in the act that if the licence is not transferred, if that is not undertaken by the licensee, that they will lose their licence?

Mr Klees: It's a requirement of the proponent to provide that notice. If they aren't in compliance with doing what is required of them, they are subject to the consequences of non-compliance, and one of those consequences is losing their licence to operate.

Ms Martel: I guess the problem you have is whether or not the public or the affected municipality would know that there's a transfer taking place, so whether they can bring that to someone's attention to say they didn't get a copy is a whole other matter. It goes back to my concern that the issue of whether or not this bill works very much depends on people's decision to comply, and I think we heard at the hearing from a number of land owners that even where there were very clear rules set out, they continued to have significant and major problems with some, not all, operators. I just think that where the government has an obligation now, many of those obligations should continue, to avoid the very circumstance that people found themselves in.

Mr Klees: The government will certainly continue to carry out the enforcement responsibilities. I think what has been missing in the past perhaps are some serious consequences to non-compliance. We believe that this bill addresses that and we are very confident that the proponents will do what they're called upon to do.

The Chair: Shall the amendment by Ms Martel carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment does not carry.

Mr Michael Brown: I move that section 18 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 15 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Transfer of part of licence

"(12) This section applies with necessary modifications to the transfer of a part of a licence that relates to a part of the licensed site."

The reason for this is a concern that has been expressed by aggregate producers that if an operator is operating on more than one parcel of land, we should be able to transfer the licence when the operations actually

cease on one of the parcels. He doesn't need to remain licensed on the other side, but he can still operate without a full transfer of licence if he's not operating on one parcel. For example, he may lose the lease. It may be fully rehabilitated and there's no necessity any longer for the licence on that section. This is just to facilitate some of those real world things that actually happen.

Mr Klees: We see some pitfalls here. When a licence is initially granted, it's granted on the basis of the total picture, the total site. What we risk here is a splitting up or creating some additional complexities that weren't anticipated at the time of approval. The other problem that we see potentially is with regard to rehabilitation requirements. It's important that when we monitor a site we know the total site is licensed, the total site comes under the responsibility of the various conditions set out at the very beginning. The government feels that we're leaving ourselves open here to some issues that may not be anticipated at the time of approval, but then we have to begin to deal with them once that splitting of the licence takes place. We're uncomfortable with this and will not be supporting this proposed amendment.

Mr Michael Brown: Frankly, I believe the government makes some good points. I hadn't anticipated some of those arguments. My intention here was probably not what the wording of this amendment does. Given that, I'll withdraw the amendment.

The Chair: There being no further amendments to section 15, shall section 15 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 15 carries.

I see no amendments for sections 16 through 18. Shall sections 16 through 18 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 16 through 18 carry.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 19(2) of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"(2) Clauses 23(3)(a) and (b) of the act are repealed and the following substituted:

"(a) the aggregate is required for a project of road construction or road maintenance;

"(b) the aggregate is to be obtained from outside the limits of the right of way of the highway; and."

The Chair: Just for Ms Martel's information, if this government amendment is carried, then yours will be out of order.

Mr Klees: This amendment essentially returns the purpose of wayside permits to its original intent. Wayside permits were devised as a means of facilitating the supply of aggregates from nearby sources for road construction and maintenance. The elimination of their use for non-road projects, which is the intent here, reflects a return to the original intent. There have been some concerns about misuse or abuse of the latitude that had been in place by having the word "urgent," and so we feel that this cleans this up and clarifies the matter.

1040

Ms Martel: I want to return to some of the comments that we received from the region of Niagara and also from the mayor of Caledon, both of whom expressed some serious concerns about wayside permits and how they have been used in the past. Specifically, they are concerned that they, especially the mayor of Caledon, had seen over a number of years a number of wayside permits

and pits that just grew. There has been no environmental control because they don't come under the same provisions as a licensed site would. Both of those groups of people made it clear that there really should be a serious look given by the ministry to sort out what is a legitimate use of a wayside pit; also to be very careful about MTO's responsibility and participation in that because they also raised concerns that, more often than not, MTO was one of the main advocates to get a pit opened at the expense of a commercial operator. They were concerned about that.

The reason I was going to move to go back to the original language or the language that's in the current bill right now, which talks about an "urgent" project, is to somehow get at that circumstance. I must say that I don't feel that the amendments that you've put forward deal directly with that. You're still going to allow aggregate for a project of road construction or road maintenance. There is no time limit on that construction; you could have a major project, unless there's a limitation somewhere else in the bill, and maybe you could describe that to me. But I want to be sure that what we're talking about is a project where there is no close substitute, it is very time-limited and it is not a project that will go on and on without any kind of environmental look at what's happening. Those are very much the concerns expressed to us by some of the municipal leaders.

Mr Klees: I believe your concerns are legitimate, but I also believe they will be addressed. First of all, the wayside permits will be subject to the standards and will be required to comply with the standards set out for all pits.

With regard to the time frame, it is intended as a limited period, and there is an 18-month time limit to all wayside pits. If there's to be an extension, it will have to be revisited. I think both of your concerns are addressed in the context.

Ms Martel: May I just ask where the 18 months comes in? Can you just refer me to the section? It must be later on in the bill.

Mr Ray Pichette: Sorry, you're looking for the section that limits to 18 months?

Ms Martel: Perhaps when we get to it you can just advise me then so I'm clear that it appears directly in the act and is not actually going to be found in a reg.

Mr Klees: I thought it was in the regs, but perhaps while it's being searched for — can we get back to Ms Martel on that question?

Ms Martel: We'll move on.

The Chair: Any further discussion on the amendment? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

In view of that amendment carrying, Ms Martel's amendment is out of order.

There are no further amendments to section 19. Shall section 19, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 19, as amended, carries.

I see no amendments to sections 20 through 28. Shall sections 20 through 28 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 20 through 28 are carried.

Mr Klees: We have that answer for Ms Martel.

Mr Pichette: The section under the Aggregate Resources Act is section 31, which reads, "A wayside permit

expires on the completion of the project in respect of which it was issued or 18 months after its date of issue, whichever occurs first."

Ms Martel: Thank you.

Mr Klees: I move that section 29 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(0.1) Clause 34(1)(a) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"(a) to excavate aggregate or topsoil that is on land the surface rights of which are the property of the crown, even if the surface rights are leased to another person."

The explanation for this is to effectively bring leased lands under the Mining Act, under the clear jurisdiction of this act or definition of the act, if you will. When surface rights are leased under the Mining Act, they cease to be considered the property of the crown under the act. In the past, this has resulted in confusion in the interpretation of this clause and the argument that an aggregate permit is not required. That is not what was intended and we wanted to ensure that it was very clear that even those lands that are leased under the Mining Act would require an aggregate permit.

Mr Michael Brown: So this means that for any mining operation you would require an aggregate permit?

Mr Klees: I don't think that's what we mean. What we mean is that for any lands that are leased under the Mining Act, where there is an intention to establish an aggregate operation, a permit is required.

Mr Michael Brown: Aggregates being defined as basically sand and gravel, or is that a larger definition?

Mr Klees: It's a larger definition. We can search that up for you, if you like, but there is a broader definition of aggregates.

Mr Michael Brown: This is fundamental and I'm not totally clear — I probably should be, but I'm not — on what exactly an aggregate is by ministry definition and how easily that can be changed.

Mr Klees: I'm happy to give you the definition. It's in the Aggregate Resources Act. If you'd like me to read it to you, I will.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes.

Mr Klees: I'm reading now from the ARA: "Aggregate" means gravel, sand, clay, earth, shale, stone, limestone, dolostone, sandstone, marble, granite, rock...or other prescribed material."

Mr Michael Brown: So it's fairly wide open to what could be decided. I have some difficulty with this.

The Chair: Ms Martel.

Ms Martel: It was a different section, so I can leave that part right now.

The Chair: No further discussion? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 34(6) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in subsection 29(3) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"More than one pit or quarry

"(6) An aggregate permit may apply to more than one pit or quarry."

This intends to address the issue of the multisite permits. As written, it relates to an area of land and effectively precludes the issuance of an aggregate permit

for other pits and quarries within the area. This presents a problem, if not clarified, in that sustainable forest licences can comprise very large tracts of land. If we don't provide this clarification, it could preclude any other commercial aggregate operations within that area of land which come under a sustainable forest licence, effectively creating a monopoly situation. That was not the intent, and as a result of this amendment it would allow for commercial operations within that area.

Ms Martel: I think what you're doing is creating a monopoly situation because you're now adding a new provision which allows the minister to grant a multisite aggregate permit. You'll have one operator in a very large tract of land who will have, as I read it, and maybe I stand to be corrected, some exclusive control over all pits and quarries within a very large tract of land.

Mr Klees: No. What we're attempting to do, the idea here, is that where there is a sustainable forest licence and there are multiple pits, you can have one aggregate permit that covers all of those pits, a multiple pit site. However, if we don't provide the clarification here, then we would preclude any other commercial operations — and this applies, by the way, strictly to crown land, as you know — on that crown land. That wasn't the intent. The intent is that we allow for applications for commercial operations on that tract of land regardless of whether it's under a sustainable forest licence or not. It would be subject to the application procedure.

Ms Martel: But why would you not then continue with individual application processes? Surely what you're allowing then is a single operator to make application for any number of aggregate permits within a licensed area. Isn't that what this amendment is now allowing them to do?

1050

Mr Klees: That's right.

Ms Martel: So doesn't that run counter to —

Mr Klees: No. I think we see here that the two can live side by side. In other words, we certainly want the opportunity for multiple-site permits to be there, but in addition to that we want to ensure the right is there for individuals to come forward and make an application for a single site elsewhere on that same property.

Ms Martel: Aren't they allowed to do that now?

Mr Klees: The way the act is worded, with the term "area of land," it could be interpreted that they would be precluded from doing that. That's what we're trying to address.

Ms Martel: Where I see that falling apart is that if you allow someone to come in and make application for any number of pits and quarries within an area, that single person could legitimately, as I read it, get access to all that, and any other operator who wanted perhaps just one pit or quarry within that area of crown land might be precluded because someone else has come in and scooped up all the licences in that area. That's what I think you allow to happen with a multipermit process.

Mr Klees: That's exactly what we're trying to address here. The way it's written now is that it excludes other operators from coming on to that particular land. We're saying we don't intend and didn't intend that kind of

monopoly. We're opening it up so others can come forward and apply for licences.

Why don't we ask counsel to address that and take another run at it?

Ms Lintell: This section was originally devised to aid the forest industry in building forest access roads. These are almost like wayside pits on crown land. The construction of the road is identified in the forest management plan. We know where it's going and we know where the sources of aggregate are. The intention is that when a section of road is being built, a permit can be issued identifying and capturing the six or 10 pits or quarries along the way that will have to be accessed to construct that road.

It prevents repeated applications for very small pits and the administration involved in dealing with this. That was the initial intention in designing that provision, and its application certainly will be limited.

Ms Martel: If I'm clear, it really doesn't have anything to do with allowing another operator access. What you're talking about is a single operator in a crown management unit, whoever has that unit, being allowed to access any number of pits along the way.

Ms Lintell: Exactly. But the way the section in the act was drafted, we realized that by trying to save the administration and simplify the process we were granting exclusivity. We were creating a monopoly situation because we said that if we issue an operator an aggregate permit, it effectively sterilized a large area of land and precluded our issuing any other permit.

In redrafting this section we are saying we may issue an aggregate permit that identifies six pits, and that's okay, otherwise we wouldn't be able to. However, we can still issue any number of individual aggregate permits to any other people within a given vicinity.

Ms Martel: I say to legal counsel I hope that's what it's doing, because my read is that it does exactly the opposite, and that's my concern. I'm not a lawyer.

The Chair: Mr Stewart thought stopping the doing of the deed was complicated.

Mr Stewart: We could use that word in here and probably clarify it.

Mr Michael Brown: I have to confess to being slightly confused by what's going on here also. I accept what counsel has said as far as the roadbuilding goes, and I believe that to be necessary. I'm a little confused about how this permits more people rather than fewer, but if you say so I'm going to have to take your word for it.

The other thing I find a little problematic in the wording, not particularly of the amendment but of the previous section, is that they talk about an "area of land." What's an area of land in legal terms? I would not have seen a sustainable forest licence as an area of land, but there you go. I would have thought you would define an area of land by a township boundary or some legal description we may know that really applies to land, whereas a sustainable forest licence is not an exclusive right; it is a right to harvest, essentially, in a particular area. I think MNR itself would have some difficulty with the idea that this is an exclusive right of a sustainable forest licence on an area of land. It's particular rights, not exclusive rights as in ownership.

Mr Klees: That's precisely the reason we felt it needed clarification. To take one more stab at it for your benefit, I'd like to ask Mr Pichette to comment on this.

Mr Pichette: First, an aggregate permit has fundamentally two purposes: (1) It is a disposition mechanism for aggregates on crown land, and (2) it provides that regulatory control for operations. The original intent was to issue sites where there is a sustainable forest licence and issue an aggregate permit for that licensed area that would allow them the disposition right, in which case they would allow it to operate many pits within that site.

If you look at the size of some of the sustainable forest licences, all of a sudden towns like Hornepayne are included in that, and there will be a commercial industry required too to satisfy the needs of the infrastructure of Hornepayne. It became very apparent the way it was written, because the aggregate permit is issued on the basis of an area of land, that it would give exclusivity rights to that permittee for all the aggregate in that boundary of land.

As a result it became very apparent that we were giving that exclusive right when all we were trying to accomplish here was to use things like the sustainable forest licence, forest management planning, and reduce paper in terms of not having to issue eight specific permits for every site. We could issue one permit that might cover eight to 10 sites and again be under the same standards. It becomes more of a paper efficiency and reduction than anything else.

This clarifies the intent of introducing that efficiency measure.

Mr Stewart: Can you just clarify something? Where it's a permit issued on crown land by the ministry, is a site plan required? In this particular case, if you are giving a blanket permit and building a road for 100 miles and you have 10 pits along the way that you've issued one blanket permit for, is the one site plan for all the pits or do you have to do an individual site plan for each pit if you do a blanket permit pit operation?

Mr Pichette: I'll just qualify something here. The road construction, and I believe we're getting to that section on the exemption, is meant to be covered predominantly by the exemption aspect of that. The operations we see that are in concert with forest operations would be more maintenance-oriented pits and as a result each would require a site plan. The vision of this thing is one permit with a schedule of sites, each having an individual site plan.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm sorry; I still have some difficulty. If we're talking about sustainable forest licences and that's the reason for this, we know that in areas that are now crown land units which are being converted to sustainable forest licences at the moment, in many cases a lot of what's happening on those units today will be fundamentally changed at least in the way the operations are run.

1100

Does this mean that if the licence holder is contracting the building and/or maintenance of roads to a third party each pit and quarry will have to be licensed to the third party for use in the area, or is the sustainable forest

licence holder that is building the road the one that has the permit? Who has the permit?

Mr Pichette: It's a matter of perspective. I think you're interpreting it as the sustainable forest licence having some degree of control over or influence on the aggregate permit. It does not. That's the first thing. This is very separate, the aggregate permit being a disposition instrument and a regulatory instrument.

We're trying to introduce certain efficiencies, particularly with regard to paper transactions, with the client. The permittee of record is the one that's accountable. There's no restriction in this bill that says the third party can't be the permittee and therefore accountable for one or a multitude of permits under one permit. From our perspective the permittee is accountable, and it doesn't necessarily have to be the sustainable forest licensee.

Our ability to issue a permit that will cover many sites is all we're trying to accomplish.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes, I understand that. I'm just trying to understand: If it is a third party, if Shelley Martel Contracting is going to look after the aggregate part, if Shelley Martel Contracting holds the particular licence, there's more of a danger of that becoming a commercial pit for use in Hornepayne than there is for the sustainable forest licence. Perhaps there's no difference. I guess you're telling me it doesn't really make any difference.

Mr Pichette: The intent of the section is to deal with the forest sector a little more efficiently as they are a major producer of aggregates, but it doesn't preclude us from dealing with the commercial sector in this fashion as well.

The Chair: Shall the amendment, as proposed by Mr Klees, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Mr Brown, you have an amendment to section 29.

Mr Michael Brown: We've decided not to place it.

The Chair: Mr Brown withdraws that amendment. Shall section 29, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 29, as amended, carries.

Shall sections 30 through 32 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 30 through 32 are carried.

Ms Martel: I move that section 33 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"33. Sections 37(3) and (4) of the act are repealed."

In this section the amendment would do the following: Subsections (3) and (4) of the current act appear elsewhere in the new bill that has been put forward by the government. My amendment would allow everything that is in the current act under section 37 to remain in effect.

I'm doing this because I do not believe aggregate permits should be issued in perpetuity, which the new bill is now proposing. I believe the resource belongs to the public, not to the operator. The current wording in the act which says an aggregate permit cannot be fixed for more than a period of five years is sufficient to ensure that the public continues to be satisfied that a site is being maintained in good order and every five years there is a chance when that is renewed for it to either return to the hands of the public or to continue if all of the conditions have been met. I don't like that we are moving now to grant a licence and there is no kind of limitation on that

in terms of timing of that licence to remain in an operator's hands.

Also, I was concerned that under subsection (5) of the current act there are specific references to how conditions must be set on licences to protect fish habitat in those areas where operations are taking place underwater. When I looked at the new bill, I could not find any continuing specific reference to those circumstances and I don't think we should be removing a very particular reference in the act right now that says there will be conditions set on licences where those operations are taking place underwater. But I couldn't find it anywhere in the act and that's why I believe that the wording in the current act should remain.

Those are the reasons for the amendment, I say to the parliamentary assistant. First, I don't think we should be moving to indefinite licences without any time limit, and that's what the government changes do; second, I believe ought to still be somewhere in the bill, not in regulation, a very specific comment with respect to protection of fish habitat for operations that are occurring underwater. I don't see that anywhere in the new act, but maybe it is there and I just haven't found it yet.

Mr Klees: First, with regard to the reference to the indefinite time period, I again we've had some discussion on this matter. What we're attempting to do here is to avoid administrative processing of applications or reapplications that may be unnecessary under the circumstances. Particularly in light of the fact that annual compliance reports are required, the ministry has a very up-to-date view of the operation and has a good sense of whether or not it's in compliance — in fact, much more so now than under the previous circumstances.

Keep in mind that the ministry has the latitude to impose terms if, given the circumstances of an application, it's deemed appropriate that there should be a limitation in term. That can be set down as part of the condition by the ministry. That's not precluded. And so, from the standpoint of administration, we feel that the time frame is something that is not necessary.

One other factor to this — and this is a very practical matter — when it comes to a commercial operation seeking financing or doing their business plans, if there is a two-year limitation, for example, on an operation, even though the intention is that it be renewed, it's very difficult for an operator to establish a sense of security in terms of the viability of that operation.

With regard to the aquatic habitat, it is the intention to incorporate that into regulation. I hear what you're saying, but it is the intention of the government to incorporate those standards into the regulations along with the other standards that we've been referring to, and so the government will not be supporting this amendment.

Ms Martel: Just briefly, with reference to an ability of an operator, for example, to get financing based on the length of a contract or the length of a permit, we have the same situation that occurs in the forestry industry now. You have five-year, 10-year, 20-year forest management plans and those people still continue to operate. They don't seem to have a problem getting financing for very major and very expensive undertakings on land that

they are operating under in terms of the sustainable forestry licence. So I don't buy the argument that this somehow will make it easier or will guarantee financing for an operator.

Right now, you have a fixed period already in the act. I have never received complaints from operators in my riding that they couldn't get financing for an undertaking because of that fact. I continue to believe that the same checks and balances that you have under sustainable licences, where there are very specific reviews, are very necessary, especially now because the number of staff that will be left at the MNR will be significantly reduced. If nothing else, if you want to issue it every five years — the current act says it can be a fixed period of no more than that — you will at least be assured that there will be a very thorough review of the permit of the site and of what's going on, because that renewal will have to take place. Given that the number of inspectors will be so reduced, it's the one thing you could hold out to municipalities and to the public, to say that at least on those periods of time we will be going through this very carefully, because I think outside of that, the ministry inspectors won't have time to do much of a review of anything.

1110

The Chair: Any further discussion on the amendment? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment does not carry.

Shall section 33 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 33 is carried.

There are no amendments to sections 34 and 35. Shall sections 34 and 35 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 34 and 35 are carried.

Section 36: Just a note here that the government has an amendment and Ms Martel also has an amendment. Ms Martel, your proposed amendment, the first part of which is identical to the government amendment, if the government amendment passes, would then be out of order. Your way of dealing with the second part of your amendment is either to propose an amendment to the government's amendment, which would add that second part, or once the government amendment is dealt with, to change your amendment so that it only deals with the second section of that. I just wanted to make you aware of that.

Mr Klees: I'm also prepared to be flexible in terms of how we deal with this. This goes back to a similar amendment that we agreed to that was introduced by Ms Martel under section 12, 15.1. Ms Martel, if you would prefer to have this be your amendment, we'll agree to that, to an amendment to your amendment, or we'll introduce our motion now.

Ms Martel: Just for clarification purposes, let me ask the parliamentary assistant: I assume that subsection 1.2 of my amendment you will not support, because you didn't with the other one. So having said that, I'm prepared to delete from my amendment the section with reference to ministry review, although, having said that, I really do believe the ministry has to find a way to keep municipalities informed of what's happening through these sites.

The Chair: On that basis, Mr Klees, do you want to withdraw your amendment?

Mr Klees: Yes, I will.

The Chair: Ms Martel, you want to propose an amendment to your amendment.

Ms Martel: Then I would move that section 40.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 36 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Copy for municipality

"(1.1) The permittee shall give a copy of the report to the clerk of each regional municipality, county and local municipality in which the site is located."

The Chair: Ms Martel has proposed an amendment to section 36. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Just to advise Ms Martel again, if Mr Klees's amendment to section 36 carries, your following proposed amendment would then be out of order.

Mr Klees: This amendment is parallel to the amendment that we have just dealt with relating to section 12, 15.1(4). This incorporates the same changes that we had some extensive discussions around. I will proceed to read it into the record.

I move that section 40.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 36 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Disclosure of contravention

"(4) If an annual compliance report discloses a contravention of this act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the permit,

"(a) the permittee shall,

"(i) within a period of 90 days after the report is submitted to the minister or within such longer period as may be specified by the minister, take such steps as may be necessary to remedy the contravention, and

"(ii) immediately stop the doing of any act that forms part of the contravention; and

"(b) if the permittee complies with subclause (a)(ii), no prosecution shall be commenced in respect of the contravention, and no notice may be served by the minister under clause 43(1)(b) or section 45 in respect of the contravention,

"(i) during the period described in subclause (a)(i), or

"(ii) after the period described in subclause (a)(i), if the permittee complies with subclause (a)(i) within that period."

The Chair: Notwithstanding the stopping the doing of the act, Mr Klees?

Mr Klees: I wanted to see if Mr Stewart had any problems with —

Mr Stewart: I do. It's the worst English I ever heard in my life.

Mr Klees: As I indicated previously, this parallels the amendment passed to section 12, subsection 15.1(4), and affects the changes that were discussed at that time relating to this section.

The Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

The following amendment proposed by Ms Martel is now out of order.

Mr Klees has another proposed amendment to section 36. Just before he reads it into the record, I advise Ms

Martel and Mr Brown that should the government amendment carry, your two amendments to the same sections would then be out of order.

Mr Klees: I move that section 40.1 of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 36 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Suspension of permit

"(5) A permit shall be deemed to have been suspended if,

"(a) the permittee fails to submit an annual compliance report in accordance with this section; or

"(b) the permittee's annual compliance report discloses a contravention of this act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the permit and the permittee fails to comply with subclause (4)(a)(i) or (ii).

"Reinstatement; failure to submit

"(6) A permit that was deemed to have been suspended under clause (5)(a) shall be deemed to be reinstated if the permittee submits the annual compliance report to the minister.

"Reinstatement; failure to comply with clause (4)(a)

"(7) A permit that was deemed to have been suspended under clause (5)(b) shall be deemed to be reinstated if the permittee,

"(a) takes such steps as are necessary to remedy the contravention that was disclosed in the annual compliance report, if the permittee failed to comply with subclause (4)(a)(i); or

"(b) stops the doing of the act that formed part of the contravention, if the permittee failed to comply with subclause (4)(a)(ii)."

This is the same as section 12, subsections 15.1(4), (5), (6) and (7). It parallels the legislative drafting changes to that.

The Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

The next two amendments are now out of order.

No further amendments to section 36. Shall section 36, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 36, as amended, carries.

There are no amendments to sections 37 through 41. Shall sections 37 through 41 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 37 through 41 are carried. Section 42.

Mr Klees: I move that section 42 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"(42) Subsections 46(2), (3) and (4) of the act are repealed and the following substituted:

"Returns and payment

"(2) Every aggregate permittee shall make a return to the aggregate resources trust, when required by the minister, showing the quantity of material removed from the site and enclosing the required royalty payment payable to the trust.

"Deposit

"(3) The minister may require an aggregate permittee to pay a deposit to the aggregate resources trust, in an amount determined by the minister, for the payment of any royalty that is due or that may become due under subsection (1)."

This was effectively an oversight when the bill was initially drafted. Royalties were missed in the original

drafting. Effectively, we are now incorporating this into the act to allow the trust to administer the royalties on behalf of the government.

1120

Mr Michael Brown: It's interesting. I think this is a new concept, that the trust will be actually administering the royalty part, the payments to the crown?

Mr Klees: They will be collecting. In light of the fact that they are administering all of the other financial transactions and doing other collections, we are simply now transferring to the trust the authority to also collect the royalties, with the understanding that it will be transmitting those to the crown. Rather than have two separate entities doing the collections, we're saying, let's let the trust handle that and then transfer those royalties to the crown.

Mr Michael Brown: The trust is now becoming the tax collector, so to speak. Is that what I hear?

Mr Klees: The trust will be collecting the royalties as one of the terms of the obligations that the trust has.

Mr Michael Brown: One of those other words for taxes. I understand what you're doing. We've already decided, however, that this is an independent, privately administered trust.

Mr Klees: It has responsibility directly to the crown, as you're aware. The trust will be reporting to the minister. The minister will be tabling the accounting of the trust with the Legislative Assembly, so I think the accountability certainly is there. We're simply asking for an administrative efficiency here.

Ms Martel: A quick question: If the royalties are collected by the crown now, by MNR staff, aren't you going to have a duplication? You're going to have the trustee collect that and then you're going to have to have a second remittance to the crown. Correct? Why would you make a change that would have money that currently flows to the crown be diverted to the trust and then returned to the crown?

Mr Klees: It's simply a matter of who's doing the collecting. If we've got one entity doing the collecting, doing the accounting for that, responsible for maintaining the records and submitting, we're simply looking at that as one less function that the crown has to take.

Ms Martel: So you'll have someone who does that currently in the ministry who will no longer do that and supposedly lose their job, and you will have someone at the trustee's office now do that and pick up that job. Is that what you're saying? Oh, come on.

Mr Klees: It's no secret that we believe in less government. We believe that if there's a function that can be performed by the private sector, we're asking them to perform it.

Ms Martel: But I'm just asking if you don't see the contradiction. You've spent most of your time — and you're supposed to do this — talking about administrative efficiencies, except that this is actually a contradiction of that. Right now the money comes directly into government. What you're going to do instead is have people send the money to the trustee and then the trustee is going to remit to government. As I see it, that's an extra step which is completely unnecessary from what the process is now, unless my understanding of the current process is all wrong.

Mr Klees: Let me ask Mr Pichette to make a comment on that.

Mr Pichette: Currently, right now, all fees will go to the trustee and all permittees would effectively then have to write out two separate cheques: one to the trustee for the fees and the other one to the crown for the royalties. We figure there is far less confusion for the permittees out there if they write one cheque to the trustee that includes the royalties and the fees. The trustee is then accountable to remit those royalties to the crown in one lump sum, rather than us having a multitude of offices collecting them. That's where the efficiencies are introduced.

Mr Klees: The crown will be receiving only one cheque from the trust as opposed to having to process numerous cheques from across the province.

Mr Michael Brown: Will the trust be in the position of verifying the royalty payments? Are you also changing that administrative responsibility? Obviously that's based on quantity. Is it the position that now the MNR staff will verify quantities, or is it the trust?

Mr Klees: The trust will have the responsibility to ensure that the appropriate royalties are collected. The confirmation for that is through the compliance reports, where the actual follow-up on that will take place. Again, it's all within the context of the one form, the one administrative step.

The Chair: With that explanation, all those in favour of this particular amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Shall section 42, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 42, as amended, carries.

I see no amendments to sections 43 and 44. Shall sections 43 and 44 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 43 and 44 carry.

We have a Liberal amendment to deal with adding a new section.

Mr Michael Brown: It's not going to be placed.

The Chair: That amendment is withdrawn.

On section 45 we have two amendments, the same, one by the Liberals and one by the New Democrats. The New Democrats' motion was submitted first, so we will deal with it.

Ms Martel: I move that subsection 50(1) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 45 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Rehabilitation security payments

"(1) If requested by the trustee of the Aggregate Resources Trust, the minister may require licensees to permittees to make rehabilitation security payments in the prescribed amounts and within the prescribed times."

The purpose for the amendment is to make it clear that it is the trustee who also has some obligation or responsibility or authority to advise the minister when additional payments should be made. As I understand other sections of the act right now, the minister makes a determination when additional funds might be necessary or due from licensees and permittees, but it isn't the minister who's overseeing the trust. Our change makes it clear that the trustee should also have some responsibility to inform/advise the minister when payments are required.

Mr Klees: We view this as effectively undermining the Lieutenant Governor in Council's power to set the fees. We have no problem with the trustee making recommendations regarding fees. We expect that would happen, but we don't believe it's something that is necessary to incorporate into the legislation. We do not see the trustee as the overarching authority. We do see that the trustee has administrative responsibilities. They do have responsibility to make recommendations, but the authority for setting the fees we believe must be retained by the crown. We will not be supporting this amendment.

Mr Michael Brown: As we have the identical amendment, I think what Mr Klees just said makes the case. It seems to me, having been around this place for nine or 10 years, or whatever it is now, the concern is that the trust be administered in an actuarial way, in a way that is businesslike and forthright, and that a trustee bears the responsibility of the "administrative function." The introduction of the minister being in charge, if you might pardon me, introduces the political aspect of this. That is what concerns the public at large. The minister may be, for whatever reason, sympathetic to one side or the other. He may require either too large a payment or too small a payment for a completely political reason rather than an actuarial reason.

Given that these reports are to the Legislature, what happens with this trust is publicly accountable. It seems to me it only makes good sense to have the trustee independently determine these issues on the basis of sound business practice, not for any other kind of reason. I'm quite surprised that the parliamentary assistant would suggest that somehow the crown may always make the actuarially appropriate decision instead of a trustee.

1130

Mr Klees: You shouldn't be surprised, because I said that the minister would look to the trust for recommendations. However, as you so well know, the buck stops with the minister on these things. The minister may well feel that it's prudent, regardless of what the trust instructs, to collect additional fees to ensure that the resources are there to perform whatever obligations the trust has. What you have here in this amendment effectively binds or precludes the minister from taking that prudent action. We don't feel it's appropriate to tie the minister's hands in that regard. What we're really achieving here by allowing the flexibility is exactly the kind of prudent thinking you're suggesting needs to take place in this place.

Mr Michael Brown: You're suggesting that the minister may decide to ask for additional funds. The minister also could ask, depending on who the minister is, for less funding for the particular trust; it works both ways. The minister could make the decision both ways, and it seems to me that it's probably an inappropriate interference in the operation of a trust fund, one of the bases of which will be to be actuarially sound.

We hate to say it, but we've seen governments over the years play all kinds of games with trusts, with accounting methods, with all sorts of things. We're all aware of that. I would be most pleased with the business decision on this issue as something that the Provincial

Auditor would probably support. Why the minister needs to interfere in this is beyond me.

Mr Klees: We prefer to refer to this as discretion in the public interest.

Mr Michael Brown: I know you do.

Ms Martel: My argument's just a little bit different from Mr Brown's. I understood the parliamentary assistant to say this somehow usurps the power of the Lieutenant Governor. I don't think so. If you read it again, very clearly what we're saying is that the minister may request. It doesn't say "shall." What we're saying, though, is that as the trust is set up under this legislation, it will assume all the administrative functions. I suspect there may come a time where they will determine that more funding is needed to deal with any of those pits and quarries that have been abandoned.

What I was attempting to do in moving the amendment was to say that at that point where the trustee who is assuming responsibility for this fund under this act determines that payments have to be made, that trustee, or the board of directors, however it ends up being formed, can and should make a recommendation to the minister that the minister then increase the fees or ask for new fees from a whole set of new permittees and licensees. The minister still continues to have the power by regulation to do that. We're not suggesting that the trustee assume that power. What we're saying, though, is that the overseer of the funds on a day-to-day basis is the trustee. Then surely the trustee should have some responsibility to make recommendations, to give direction to the minister, to say: "The funding is low at this point in time. You better recommend some more."

Mr Klees: That will be one of the responsibilities of the trustee that will be clearly spelled out in the trust agreement.

The Chair: Any further discussion on this amendment? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Shall section 45, as amended, carry?

Interjection.

The Chair: Wait a minute now. Hang on a second. There's some confusion on the question here.

Mr Klees: What was the question?

The Chair: The question is, shall —

Ms Martel: It just got carried, I think.

The Chair: The question was it would be wise to pay attention.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): Could we have a recorded vote on that one?

Mr Michael Brown: Too late.

The Chair: I ask for all-party consent to re-ask the question. Agreed. Thank you very much. Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Defeated.

Shall section 45 carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 45 is carried.

I see no amendments to section 46. Shall section 46 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Mr Klees: I'd like to address an oversight again that was brought to our attention by legislative counsel. It has to do with the fact that now that the trust has been given responsibility for rehabilitation, there's a section of the

act now that is redundant and would conflict. As a result, I would like to move an amendment that addresses that issue.

I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"46.1 Section 56 of the act is repealed."

The explanation for that, as I indicated, is that in light of the fact that the trust now has been assigned the various responsibilities that are laid out in section 56, it really is a redundancy.

The Chair: Any discussion on that? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 46.1 is carried.

I see no amendments to sections 47 and 48. Shall sections 47 and 48 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 47 and 48 are carried.

Section 49: Mr Klees, an amendment.

Mr Klees: I withdraw this motion.

The Chair: The amendment to section 49 is withdrawn. Shall section 49 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 49 is carried.

I see no amendments to sections 50 and 51.

Ms Martel: May I just make a point to the parliamentary assistant with respect to section 50? This repeals section 8 of the act, which was the section that laid out notification processes in unorganized territories for people who wanted to be advised of applications. As I said on numerous occasions during the hearings, I fundamentally disagree that this notification should be taken out of the act and now put into regulation. We have seen that again and again in this bill, and I really think that notification, whether it be to people living in unorganized communities or to affected municipalities, should stay and have the force of law in the act. Since we haven't seen the regs, we don't know what the notification process is going to look like. I really strongly disagree with the move by the government in that regard.

The Chair: Shall sections 50 and 51 carry?

Mr Michael Brown: I have a question to ask about section 51. Can we deal just with section 50, get section 50 passed?

The Chair: Shall section 50 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 50 is carried.

Section 51: Mr Brown.

Mr Michael Brown: I just wonder what the reason for using regular letter mail as opposed to registered mail would be.

Mr Klees: It's a function of cost.

Mr Michael Brown: But what assurance do you have that the letter was actually delivered if you use regular mail?

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Mr Klees: Mr Brown, are you calling into question the efficiency of the —

Mr Michael Brown: Yes.

Mr Klees: Are you?

Mr Michael Brown: I'm not actually calling into question — I'm talking about the efficiency of being assured that the person or the company actually received it.

Mr Klees: I think the requirement for notification is very clear. The expectation that notification be made, even in the existing act — let me just read something that

may shed some light on this for you. This is subsection 64(2):

"Service made by registered mail shall be deemed to be made on the fifth day after the day of mailing unless the person on whom service is being made establishes that the person did not, acting in good faith, and for cause beyond that person's control, receive the notice until a later date."

I think what we're saying here is that notification has to be made. The discretion is up to the individual as to whether it shall be made by registered mail or by regular mail. It's a function of compliance. We fully expect that these people will comply with that notification. To impose the additional cost of registered mail we feel is unnecessary.

Ms Martel: Two things: It's a cost that most of them bear now, and I find it interesting that even in the submission that was made by the aggregate producers, who are probably the group most affected by this provision, they clearly stated that the current provisions in the act should remain; ie, the use of registered mail. I don't understand, when the producers themselves have made it clear to this group that the provision should stay, why the government then would feel it is necessary to take it out. It is a cost that they bear now, and I think for them it is an added protection when they are going about doing their business to know that changes and proper notification are going to take place. Where is this coming from, this need to do that? It's certainly not coming from the producers themselves.

Mr Klees: There's the issue of efficiency of cost. What we're trying to do here is to streamline this to the degree that it could be.

There's another factor. It's a practical issue, and I haven't discussed this with staff, but registered mail doesn't necessarily assure that the individual receives the notification. Registered mail may or may not be accepted for delivery. The point we're trying to make here is that notification must be given. We're placing that responsibility on the individual to do the notification. Sometimes the whole issue of registered mail can be used in a negative way. If someone refuses to receive it, they can say, "I didn't receive it." I think to simply rely on notification in the natural course of events would be to the benefit of the system.

Ms Martel: They might refuse to receive it, but there still would be a record of it having been sent and that whoever was responsible for undertaking the notification did carry out their obligation. That's the difference. When you've got it in regular mail, you just don't have those kinds of traces put on things, or that kind of proof. I just don't understand why the government is moving when the association itself said to us: "Keep that particular section of the act in place. It's a protection for us." I don't see what's drawing the government to move from that position now, because it's not coming from them. So I don't know who is recommending that change.

The Chair: Basically we haven't got an amendment on the floor here. If nobody's prepared to put forward an amendment, I think I'll call the question on this section.

Ms Martel: We have to vote against it.

Mr Michael Brown: We could vote against it. We have the ability to speak to any clause we wish here. I find this reasonably incomprehensible. It just doesn't make any sense. I know, and probably we all know, the regular mail comes in, we get the letter from Ed McMahon and we get the letter from Mike Harris, and a lot of it ends up on the fridge. The other part of having registered mail is that it brings it directly to the attention of the people who are getting it that this is something out of the ordinary. With the amount of often surplus mail we get, I think everybody wants to —

Mr Klees: Let me just say this, Mr Brown: If you feel so strongly about this, would you care to introduce an amendment? We'll hear it, we'll vote on it and we'll see how the vote comes out.

Mr Michael Brown: All we have to do is vote against it.

Ms Martel: We looked at moving an amendment but we were advised by legislative counsel that we have to vote against this section, because what we want to do is revert to the wording that's in the current act. That's why we didn't place an amendment to this section.

Mr Michael Brown: That's why I asked.

Mr Klees: Let's call the vote on it.

The Chair: Shall section 51 carry?

Mr Michael Brown: Recorded vote.

The Chair: All those in favour?

Ayes

Danford, Flaherty, Maves, Parker, Ross, Young.

The Chair: All those opposed?

Nays

Brown, Klees, Martel, Stewart.

The Chair: Section 51 is carried.

Section 52. Mr Klees, you —

Mr Michael Brown: Point of order, Mr Chair: I ask unanimous consent to reopen that. Could we have unanimous consent? I think people were perhaps confused.

Interjections.

The Chair: I don't see unanimous consent.

Ms Martel: I thought we gave you one. Five minutes ago we gave you guys a break on this.

Mr Klees: Mr Chair, I'm willing to give unanimous consent to doing this vote again.

The Chair: Pardon, Mr Klees? I didn't understand what you said.

Mr Klees: I think there was some confusion perhaps on the part of some members of the committee as to what the question was. Certainly I'm prepared to offer unanimous consent to do this vote again on this section.

The Chair: Ms Martel?

Ms Martel: Yes.

Mr Michael Brown: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. Shall section 51 carry?

Mr Michael Brown: Recorded vote.

The Chair: Are you calling for a recorded vote again, Mr Brown?

Mr Michael Brown: Yes.

The Chair: All those in favour of section 51 carrying?

Ayes

Flaherty, Maves, Parker.

The Chair: All those opposed?

Nays

Brown, Klees, Martel, Ross, Stewart, Young.

The Chair: Section 51 does not carry.

Mr Klees: I move that section 52 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(0.1) Subsections 66(1) and (2) of the act are repealed and the following substituted:

"Act overrides municipal bylaws, etc

"(1) In the event of a conflict, this act, the regulations, the conditions of a licence and a site plan prevail over any municipal bylaw, official plan or development agreement.

"Application

"(2) Subsection (1) applies even if the bylaw, official plan or development agreement came into effect before the coming into force of section 52 of the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996."

Current provisions of section 66 provide for an override. This clarifies the original intent.

Ms Martel: Let me just be clear. We're giving the government the opportunity to override a municipal official plan. Is that correct?

The Chair: Yes, section 52, subsections 66(1) and (2).

Ms Martel: Can I ask then why the government was not prepared to override what may be changes that had not occurred to an official plan in an earlier section? I moved an amendment from the regional municipality of Niagara with respect to — sorry, Mr Chair. I'm just trying to find it. Under section 10, I moved an amendment which raised a concern from the municipalities that they didn't want aggregate extraction to be permitted in appropriate areas not envisioned in the official plan. The government said at that time it wasn't their view that they were going to get involved in the official plan process or override it. Can you explain to me what the change is here where it now becomes necessary to do so?

Mr Klees: That is at the licensing stage. What we're addressing here is that where there is a conflict between the provincial legislation and the prevailing municipal bylaw, official plan or development plan, it is the provincial legislation that prevails.

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Ms Martel: Can you just give an example so I know how this works on the ground?

Mr Pichette: I'm trying to think of a good example here: where a municipal bylaw comes in and changes the setbacks that were established through the licence and that are currently a condition on the licence or on the site plan.

Ms Martel: Do you mean it minimizes the setbacks?

Mr Pichette: It might expand the setback. In other words, let's say the setback's 100 metres and it expands it to 300 metres. In this case there would be a conflict if

there's a licence that says 100 metres and a municipal bylaw that says 300 metres. The licence condition, because it's under provincial legislation, would prevail. That's the way it is right now.

Ms Martel: What does a municipality do in the event it disagrees with that? Do they have a right to appeal?

Mr Pichette: The municipality is very much a part of the licensing process in establishing the setbacks through the process of licensing, through their comments, and there are also some standards that identify minimum setbacks.

The Chair: Any further discussion on this amendment? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 66(6) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in section 52 of the bill, be amended by striking out "section 50" in the third line and substituting "section 52."

Effectively, this is a correction to a typing error that took place in the original drafting.

The Chair: All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Ms Martel: I move that section 52 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 66 of the Aggregate Resources Act:

"Exception

"(7) Despite subsections (1) and (5), a development agreement or development permit prevails over this act and the regulations to the extent that it requires a licensee or permittee to take action, including the upgrading of haulage roads, to reduce the impact of aggregate extraction."

The purpose of the amendment was to allow municipalities to enter into agreements with licensees on issues that related to extraction in their own municipality. As I understand it, the proposed act places some really strict limitations on their ability to do so, and what I'm trying to get in place is that the municipality will be in a position and will have a legal right to make some agreements with the operator, be it for increased aggregate for those municipal roads that are going to be used by a company, which will then experience a lot of wear and tear and which they might not have enough money to do maintenance on. So it's to allow side agreements, which would not be part of the licensing process at this point any more, to still occur and have some force and to allow the municipality to have some remedial action, particularly on those municipal roads that are going to be used by the operator.

Mr Klees: I think they have the right to do that now. The reason we couldn't agree to this amendment is that it effectively would make the entire bill redundant in terms of the role of the municipality. We feel we cannot have the municipal position in conflict with the ministry and with this act. So we just could not support this.

Ms Martel: I'm not clear on why it goes the length you say it does. The intent is not to undermine provincial regulation; the intent is to allow the municipality to have an arrangement with the operator which would allow it to do work in a municipality, particularly on roads that will be used by the operator through his task of carrying out his operation.

We heard complaints that funding is not what it used to be so municipalities are having difficult times maintaining what are public roadways that are being heavily used by operators. The intent of the amendment was to make sure that if they wanted to, they would have some right to come to an arrangement that might be separate from any arrangement they had with the government around some remedial or some compensation for those situations.

Mr Michael Brown: I agree with the intent of what Ms Martel's trying to do here. There is a growing problem, and I think the government should be aware of this, in my part of the world anyway, with the combination of lack of funding for providing roads and the need to extract various minerals and/or forest products in the area and the impact that has on townships.

I'm not sure that this actually does what we need it to do, but I want to indicate to the parliamentary assistant that his government needs to have a very careful look at what happens in these rural townships that are affected by resource extraction and harvesting, whether it be aggregates, minerals or forest products. It is quite complex and if you are going to continue to withdraw funding to these municipalities, we could get ourselves into a position where resource extraction will not take place because of municipal decisions about their roads that preclude it. I have seen municipalities put on axle limits which just absolutely preclude the extraction of resources, which has got to be counter-productive to the provincial interest and certainly to the interest of the wider area, but you can perfectly understand why particular municipalities would take this notion.

As you withdraw funding in transportation for roads, you're going to have to address the issue Ms Martel is attempting to have addressed here. I don't think it would quite work the way it's being proposed, but the intent of what she's doing needs to be addressed by the Minister of Northern Development, by the Minister of Transportation and certainly by your ministry.

Mr Klees: I appreciate the comments that were made and I just want to reassert that the right for municipalities to enter into agreements now exists and nothing in this bill precludes them from doing that, as long as it's not in conflict with the prevailing provincial regulations or conditions of the existing plan — the site plan and the conditions that relate to the site.

Mr Michael Brown: That's interesting, but you should read Bill 26 and what it precludes municipalities from charging for in this situation. There's actually a section, and I don't have Bill 26 in front of me today, which says pretty clearly that you cannot do this, particularly if it isn't within your municipality that the resource is either harvested or extracted from. In my part of the world, that affects a lot of land and a lot of municipal roads. I just want to tell you that this is a big problem and it's going to shut down, perhaps, forest industries and aggregate extraction if somebody doesn't grab the bull by the horns and go out there and find a solution that will work.

Ms Martel: I really want to say to the parliamentary assistant that your view of what is permissible is different from the municipalities. I took the amendment from the brief from the region of Niagara, which expressed a

concern about what they thought their ability was going to be to enter into these arrangements, and clearly in their brief they felt they would not be permitted to enter into side agreements or private agreements. I don't know how you get around their reading of that and whether that's a message that's been sent to other municipalities as well. But it came directly from their brief.

Mr Klees: We'll have a look at that and certainly we'll do our utmost to clarify where there may be some misunderstanding.

Mr Stewart: Is that not part of the site plan agreement? In the municipality I represent, we would include haul routes, times of operation, any type of maintenance. It was automatically in the site plan agreement. Is that not permissible? It is, is it not?

Mr Klees: Yes.

Mr Stewart: So that addresses it, does it not?

Mr Klees: It's the point I was making, that it's certainly appropriate and the authority is there now to enter into those agreements, to set those conditions out clearly as long as it's not in conflict ultimately with the provincial interest. I may have Mr Pichette comment.

Mr Pichette: It's through the process with the municipalities. Things like haul routes and setbacks are all part and parcel to the decisions that have to be made. That will most of the time find its way on to the site plan. These are very separate agreements outside of that process that we're speaking to, and that is development permits that might have something totally unrelated but might impinge on the proper operations of what's on that site plan. Hence, the previous motion made it very clear that if there was a conflict, the site plan would prevail, but if there's not a conflict, then certainly there's no problem with having a development permit that is a side agreement.

Mr Stewart: I thought that. Thank you.

The Chair: Shall this amendment carry? All those in favour of this amendment? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Shall section 52, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 52, as amended, carries.

It now being 12 o'clock and time to go to the House for a vote, we will recess until —

Mr Michael Brown: Mr Chair, I will be unable to be here this afternoon. My place will be capably taken by Mario Sergio. I must be at a very important meeting in the fine municipality of Rutherford and George, which is better known as Killarney, this evening at 6 o'clock. That's where I will be.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Brown. We will try to get this process finished in your absence. We've recessed until 3:30 this afternoon.

The committee recessed from 1202 to 1531.

The Chair: We're continuing with our clause-by-clause discussion of Bill 52. Mr Klees, do you have an amendment to section 53?

Mr Klees: I move that clause 67(f.5) of the Aggregate Resources Act, as set out in subsection 53(1) of the bill, be amended by striking out "wayside permit fees and annual permit fees" in the fifth, sixth and seventh lines and substituting "wayside permit fees, annual permit fees and royalties."

This relates to the matter we were discussing earlier about the fact that we also want to empower the trust to collect the royalties in addition to the other fees. This clarifies that.

The Chair: Any further discussion on that? All in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

Mr Sergio, a Liberal amendment to section 53.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I should say that my colleague Mr Brown, prior to his leaving, indicated that we have no more amendments. I suppose he was saying to withdraw it, if I understand it right.

The Chair: Okay, that Liberal amendment is withdrawn.

Shall section 53, as amended, carry? All in favour? Opposed? Section 53, as amended, carries.

I see no amendments to sections 54 through 61. Shall sections 54 through 61 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Sections 54 through 61 are carried.

Mr Klees: I move that clause 7.0.1(b) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 62 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(b) any activity relating to the well has been suspended."

This amendment will provide more latitude for the inspectors. Currently, there are basically two circumstances under which an inspector can order the plugging of a well, one being environmental hazards, the other if the well has been in suspension for 12 months.

This is impractical in the sense that there are many reasons a well may be under suspension and not necessarily related to environmental issues. We wanted to ensure that there was more latitude to allow the inspector's discretion in terms of ordering the plugging of a well.

The Chair: Any questions? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 7.0.2(6) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 62 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Operation of order pending appeal

"(6) Subject to subsection (6.1), the bringing of the appeal does not affect the operation of the decision or order appealed from pending disposition of the appeal."

"Same; orders under clause 7.0.1(b)

"(6.1) The bringing of an appeal stays a decision or order made under clause 7.0.1(b) pending disposition of the appeal.

"Current provision

"7.0.2(1) Any person who considers himself, herself or itself aggrieved by a decision or order of an inspector made under section 7 or 7.0.1 may appeal to the minister within 30 days after the decision" —

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr Klees, that's a little different from what I have filed. The first part down to "same, (6.1)" was identical, but then you've added some things that are not in what we have.

Mr Klees: Please give us a minute to check with staff.

In that case, we're prepared to go with the motion as it was filed with you. I suppose I would just ask you to delete from the record, then, beginning with "Current provision."

The Chair: Okay, that's fine. Is there discussion on that?

Mr Klees: The purpose for this is that operators may require the opportunity to defend a suspended status of a well where there are legitimate reasons, which may well be economic or other circumstances other than for cause relating to environmental issues. We felt it was important to provide that opportunity for appeal.

Ms Martel: Is there a time line or a time frame around — is there a current practice that the ministry wants to refer back to?

Mr Klees: I'll just defer to staff on this, if I might. The amendment the way I have it makes reference to that. I'll ask staff to address that.

Mr Pichette: The way the appeal is identified right now is that it must be heard promptly. It is intended to be a very efficient and quick appeal.

Ms Martel: Is it that what's in the act now is going to remain in the act?

Mr Pichette: Yes.

Mr Klees: Subsection 7.0.2(1) reads as follows:

"7.0.2(1) Any person who considers himself, herself or itself aggrieved by a decision or order of an inspector made under section 7 or 7.0.1 may appeal to the minister within 30 days after the decision or order is made."

There is a 30-day reference in the act now.

Ms Martel: But this is the part that doesn't appear on the amendment. Are you going to move that too, in addition to the two portions above that we currently have as the proposed amendment?

Mr Klees: That's already in the act and it'll stay in the act. The next section reads, "The appeal shall be heard and disposed of promptly by the minister's designee," and that remains in the act.

Ms Martel: I'm confused. If the time line already appears in the act, why were you proposing to move it in an amendment then?

Mr Klees: I guess that's why you didn't have it. It was originally in mine.

Ms Martel: Yes, because it's appearing in the book.

Mr Klees: Precisely.

Ms Martel: All right. I understand the problem now.

Mr Klees: They obviously caught it between the time of filing it with the clerk and now.

The Chair: All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Shall section 62, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 62, as amended, carries.

Shall section 63 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 63 carries.

1540

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 10.1(1) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 64 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Transfer of well licence

"(1) No person shall transfer a licence relating to a well without the minister's written consent."

The rationale for this amendment is that it's a common occurrence within the petroleum industry for well ownership to be divided among a number of parties in different percentages. This allows us to deal with the complexity that would be inherent in the ministry having the respon-

sibility for tracking ownership. It's really for the purpose of bringing some administrative clarity to this exercise.

Mr Sergio: When we say "the minister's written consent," would that imply any other person assigned by the minister on his behalf? Does that imply strictly the minister's written consent, or can he delegate authority to somebody else?

Mr Klees: Certainly the minister can delegate that authority. However, whoever the minister's designate is must be given that written consent. It must be on record as having been addressed to the minister.

Mr Sergio: I take it that the answer is yes. Is that assignment in the act now or should it be added to this clause here? If the minister can assign the authority, shall we have it in here or is it already in the act?

Mr Klees: I think it's already inherent. It's in the ministry act, staff advises me.

Mr Sergio: Okay. It's watertight the way I see it here, "the minister's written consent."

The Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment's carried.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 10.1(4) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 64 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Plugging by previous licensee

"(4) If, at any time after a licence relating to a well is transferred, an order to plug the well is made under section 7.0.1 but is not complied with, an inspector may require a previous licensee to plug the well at the previous licensee's expense."

This relates to my comments earlier about how the ownership of these wells is held and that often it's difficult to track ownership, so we wanted to focus on being able to refer to the licensee and obligate the licensee of the well to comply.

The Chair: Any questions? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment's carried.

Shall section 64, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 64, as amended, is carried.

I see no amendments to sections 65 and 66. Shall those two sections carry? All in favour? Any opposed? Sections 65 and 66 are carried.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 16(1) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 67 of the bill, be amended by striking out "may" in the first line and substituting "shall."

You may recall that this was an item that was brought forward by the opposition to which we agreed. We felt it only appropriate to extend the same amendment to this component of the act.

The Chair: Any comment?

Mr Klees: I'd just be appreciative if Ms Martel would vote with us on this one, seeing as she hasn't done too much of that today.

The Chair: All those in favour? Opposed? There was unanimous support for that amendment. The amendment's carried.

Mr Klees: I move that subsection 16(3) of the Petroleum Resources Act, as set out in section 67 of the bill, be amended by striking out "may" in the first line and substituting "shall."

Ms Martel: So I might be consistent, in the earlier version under the aggregates act I moved an amendment that said the person would be an employee of the crown. I would say here that in the same manner I'll vote against this particular section because I do believe that these functions should remain within the ministry, as they do under the Mining Act.

The Chair: All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

Shall section 67, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 67, as amended, is carried.

There are no amendments to sections 68 through sections 75. Shall sections 68 through section 75 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Sections 68 through section 75 are carried.

Mr Klees, you have a new section to propose?

Mr Klees: I do. I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"Transition; orders under Ontario Energy Board Act

"75.1 The Mining and Lands Commissioner appointed under the Ministry of Natural Resources Act may give any approval required by an order that was made under clause 24(b) or (c) of the Ontario Energy Board Act before subsection 72(3) of this act came into force."

Bill 52 transfers the jurisdiction of compulsory pooling, as we've had discussion previously, and unitization from the Ontario Energy Board to the Mining and Lands Commissioner. The transition that we're proposing to facilitate here is required to provide for an orderly transition of the cases that would be heard before the Mining and Lands Commissioner from the current practice.

The Chair: Any questions or comment? Shall new section 75.1 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 75.1 is carried.

There are no amendments to sections 76 and 77. Shall section 76 and section 77 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 76 and section 77 are carried.

Shall the title carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The title is carried.

Shall the bill, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The bill, as amended, is carried.

Shall I report Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries, as amended, to the House? All those in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Mr Klees: Mr Chair, could I just take one minute and get clarification? The committee will remember that there was some discussion following the minister's appearance before the committee about the designation of other areas of the province under the act. I undertook at that time that there would be consultation around that subject, and certainly we're interested in getting the members' input. Particularly I'd like to ask Ms Martel if she feels it would be appropriate specifically for some of the areas that she represents to be seriously considered for designation. Have you had any input at this point, just in the interest of getting some of our discussions moving forward?

Ms Martel: I'm certainly interested in seeing what can happen in Sudbury. As Marcel Ethier made clear, there is quite a distinction between those who operate immedi-

ately adjacent to one another, one inside a designated area and the other outside. I can't speak for the Sault and Thunder Bay because they're not, obviously, within my riding, so I don't know what the level of problems there are. I do know, though, that the northern producers particularly wanted those areas to be looked at, because they are sensitive in terms of people competing directly against each other.

If the ministry could look at at least those three communities where there seem to be the more serious problems and the more immediate problems, I would certainly be happy with that. I have not had any consultation, though, with the northern producers with respect to the undertaking that the minister and you gave last week.

Mr Klees: But with regard to Sudbury specifically, you would be in support of designating those areas?

Ms Martel: I think we have to do that.

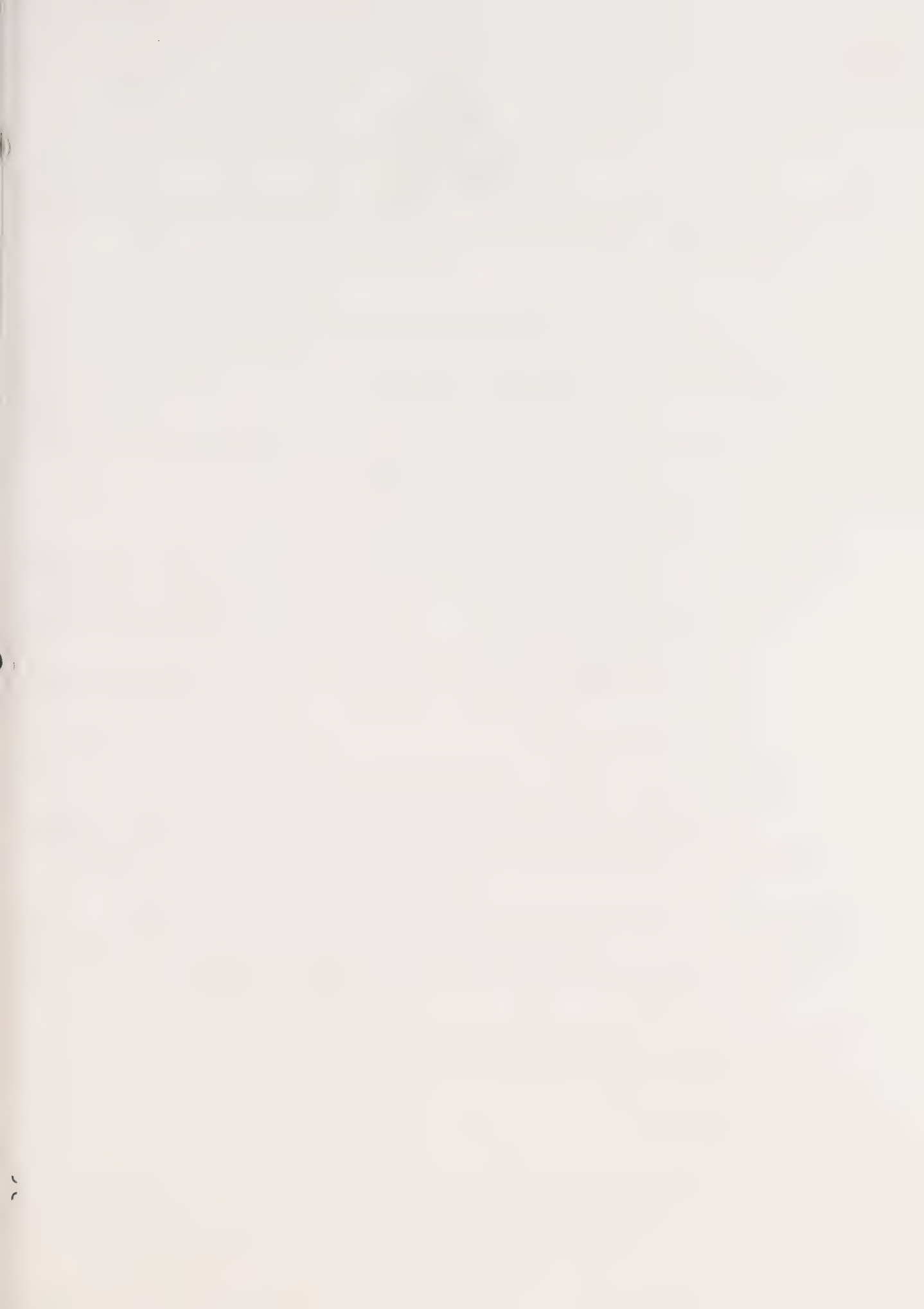
Mr Klees: Mr Chair, I'd like to thank members of the committee for their support. It's been a most interesting process. I also particularly want to thank Ms Martel for her positive vote today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Klees, and thanks to the members of the committee for your cooperation in allowing us to do our job. The committee is adjourned until Thursday morning at 10 o'clock, at which time we will revert back to clause-by-clause discussion of Bill 53, a private member's bill of Mr Gilchrist's, with a title something like "disclosure of financial status of unions and employer associations."

Mr Klees: I would be remiss if I didn't thank staff for their support throughout this process.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Klees. We stand adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1550.



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Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York ND)
*Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)
Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich L)
*Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West / -Ouest PC)
*Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview L)
*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin L) for Mr Grandmaître
Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie PC) for Mr Hardeman
Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East / -Est ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr John Parker (York East / -Est PC) for Mr Tascona

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Ray Pichette, manager, program development, non-renewable resources,
Ministry of Natural Resources
Ms Krystine Lintell, solicitor, legal services branch,
Ministry of Natural Resources

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Doug Beecroft, legislative counsel



Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 31 October 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 31 octobre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Labour Union and
Employees Association
Financial Accountability Act, 1996

Loi de 1996 sur la responsabilité
financière des syndicats
et des associations d'employés



Chair: Jack Carroll
Clerk: Lynn Mellor

Président : Jack Carroll
Greffière : Lynn Mellor

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 31 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO
COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 31 octobre 1996

The committee met at 1005 in committee room 1.

LABOUR UNION
AND EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 1996
LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ
FINANCIÈRE DES SYNDICATS
ET DES ASSOCIATIONS D'EMPLOYÉS

Consideration of Bill 53, An Act to promote Full Financial Accountability of Labour Unions and Employees Associations to their Members / Projet de loi 53, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilité financière complète des syndicats et des associations d'employés envers leurs membres.

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Welcome to clause-by-clause discussion of Bill 53. Mr Wood of legislative counsel will be available by phone if we need any help in that particular regard. When we last left this issue we were about to begin clause-by-clause, so that's our plan this morning.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): We hadn't started clause-by-clause, actually.

The Chair: We were trying to get started.

Mr Marchese: I recall that we were getting the legal person to give us some comment about this. There was the lawyer, I believe.

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Lynn Mellor): He addressed a paper in the afternoon.

Mr Marchese: He had two papers that he had collected, one in response to one of the members who had asked a question and he did some research. Is all his research in your view done or does he have anything to report based on the kinds of questions we were asking?

The Chair: As far as I understand, he was finished with anything we had asked him to do and we didn't ask him to come back and visit with us again.

Mr Marchese: I was just trying to read through the minutes of the last meeting. I thought there might have been something there. He said he hadn't completed his research to be able to determine whether or not there were any unions that had received — or how much money had been received by unions. If you don't mind, Mr Chair, I'd like to review the notes and come back to that in a second.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr Marchese: I have a question there. I think the point was that unions are covered, and I was saying that they are. "The question Mr Fenson raises is that — and I'm not sure whether we did any research — through the limited research that may have been done we don't know who is in receipt of either \$1 million worth of funding

and/or an amount equal to 10% of gross revenue. You didn't do that research." And Mr Fenson says, "I haven't been able to do that during the course of the few hours that I had between the question being put and now."

I wonder whether Mr Fenson has done any additional research or not.

The Chair: To the best of my knowledge, he hasn't done any additional research.

Mr Marchese: We might ask Mr Fenson as we go through the course of this to see whether or not he has any other information.

The Chair: Okay. We will start with section 1. Are there any amendments to section 1?

Mr Marchese: I move that clause 1(a) of the bill be repealed and the following substituted:

"(a) the assets and liabilities of labour unions, employees associations and public sector for-profit employers."

What we're including here is the public sector for-profit employers and we think that if we're going to talk about the assets and liabilities of labour unions and employees associations we should also include public sector for-profit employers there as well. We shouldn't be simply identifying one group at the exclusion of the other. In my view, we should be much more inclusive and I think this would do it.

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I have a question. What is meant by "public sector for-profit employers"? Can you briefly tell me what it involves, because when you talk about the public sector, you're talking about a very broad sector. Who is included and who is excluded?

Mr Marchese: In the public sector for-profit employers?

Mr Grandmaître: Yes.

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure what you're asking, who's included and who's excluded. What we're doing here is adding for-profit employers, whoever they may be, where they are employers and they're making money, as opposed to non-profit employers and we're saying add them as well. So rather than asking me, perhaps we might ask — if you're asking for specific examples, we might ask someone from legislative counsel to give us a hand. But that's the point I make. We're trying to distinguish between non-profit and for-profit employers. If you're asking specifically, I'm not sure why you would do that as opposed to understanding the difference between the two.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): He defines what they mean by "public sector" in one of their subsequent motions, motion 4. Maybe that might help Mr Grandmaître.

Mr Marchese: That's what I thought I just said. I'm not sure there's anything in this motion that adds more clarity. Is that what you're asking, Mr Grandmaître?

Mr Grandmaître: Yes, I think that's very helpful, but again, when you talk about the public sector, God, oh God, that's a wide range, a very wide range.

Mr Marchese: But can I ask you, Mr Grandmaître —

The Chair: Okay. Let's have a little bit of order here.

Mr Marchese: He's asking a question.

The Chair: Not really, he was making a statement. Mr Wood.

Mr Marchese: No, he's actually asking a question.

The Chair: He basically said that's a very wide range. That's not a question. Mr Wood.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I thought it was a question, as well; it was a statement or a question. My interpretation is that if you have a nursing home out there that is non-profit, if you have a nursing home out there that's profit, if you have a retirement home out there that's profit or a retirement home out there that's not profit, they're both being given funding from the province to operate. Whether you're a non-profit or a profit, if you're going to have them disclose the salaries, it should be done on a fair basis, rather than just saying for non-profit nursing homes, they'll be treated one way, and for private companies, even though they're getting 100% of their funding from the government, it would be treated in another way. Private companies that are receiving all of their funding from the government and non-profit should be all treated in the same way.

This discussion came up under Bill 26 and it is quite obvious that there is a certain amount of discrimination out there between the public sector and the private sector and we think that shouldn't necessarily be the case.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Just one question, probably to clarify, of Mr Marchese: Can you give us an example of some of these public sector companies that you're thinking of?

Mr Marchese: Mr Wood just mentioned a few. Nursing homes would be an example; for-profit day care is an example. The question I have of both you is, what is your concern around this?

Mr Sergio: I don't have a concern, I'm just trying to get a clear understanding of your amendment. If that's your explanation, that's fine.

Mr Marchese: I was just curious. I wanted to understand —

Mr Sergio: I have no problems with that.

Mr Marchese: — the questions you're raising. Do you think they should be included in there, Mr Grandmaître, or should they be excluded?

Mr Sergio: I was asking the questions for my information.

Mr Marchese: Oh, I see.

Mr Gilchrist: For the benefit of Mr Marchese, in his own motion 6 he further defines who it is he's dealing with. It's not the little nursing home that might be getting a little bit of money, it's somebody who gets at least \$1 million. I'm sure it was not his intent to mislead either of the two members from the official opposition.

It really is exactly the same as the definition in Bill 26. I appreciate their interest in adding it to the bill, but it's

completely academic because everybody they intend to cover was already covered in Bill 26 under the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. Every name of every public sector for-profit employer, whether you're Ontario Place or a large nursing home, that received that amount of money was already disclosed on March 31 of this year.

It's been a few months since we had our debate on the bill, but you may recall that the inspiration for the bill was the fact that we had already targeted certain tax-exempt organizations and it was merely the addition of labour unions and employees associations.

The public sector for-profit employers are all covered. There is not one in this province — on the assumption that your definitions are the ones you're sticking to, so your motion 6 — that received \$1 million or 10% of its gross revenues for the year if the funding is \$120,000 or more — those people are already covered.

I will be voting against this motion purely and simply because it's redundant. As I go through all the NDP motions in every case — I believe I can say in every case — all they have done is added the words "public sector for-profit employers" after the words "labour unions and employees associations."

I appreciate their interest, but I think the argument, once made and once addressed, really touches on almost every amendment before us here today. I would hope, with that clarification, that my friends from the official opposition would join with us in agreeing that this is redundant. In fact, it changes the whole tone and tenor of the bill which was meant to close a loophole, not redouble the efforts that have already been expended.

Mr Grandmaître: What we're being told is that what's in Bill 26 or part of Bill 26 applies to Bill 53. It's a done deal. Right?

Mr Gilchrist: The addition that the third party proposes, yes, all of those people are already covered under that schedule in Bill 26.

Mr Sergio: And includes this amendment as well.

Mr Grandmaître: That's right. It would include what the third party is trying to do, to include — let me see, the assets and liabilities of labour unions and employees.

Mr Gilchrist: Again, it's completely redundant because the clause already says "assets and liabilities of labour unions and employees associations." All they've done is add the words "and public sector for-profit employers."

That's already covered under a different statute. I don't know why we would want to be doing that. You folk are more experienced than I around here, but I would think any time you try to cover the same subject off in two bills, you're just inviting some kind of confusion or controversy at some point down the road. Which bill takes priority if one was to ever be amended? You would have inevitable confusion out there.

My submission would be that we treat the public sector for-profit employer amendments throughout the course of today as just that, perhaps an oversight but something which is really unnecessary because it's already covered off in a different statute.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, have you got anything additional?

Mr Marchese: What I would like is for Mr Fenson to be present to help us out with this.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): On a point of order, Mr Chair: Is that motion not out of order, if it's totally redundant?

The Chair: No, the motion's not out of order.

Mr Marchese: What we need is Mr Fenson here to help us out because I raised questions last time and we said, "Aren't unions covered already in this?" He said, "Yes, they may be, but we're not quite sure how many of them might be getting the \$100,000 or" — whatever language — "\$1 million or an amount equal to 10% of gross revenue." Mr Gilchrist raises the point that what I'm raising is redundant because it's already covered. It is difficult to say we need to trust his word. I don't. We need Mr Fenson here to help them out and help us out with some clarity around this.

1020

The Chair: We have sent out a search party for Mr Fenson. He will be here as soon as we locate him.

Mr Marchese: Could I ask for a recess? This question is fundamental.

Mr Gilchrist: On a point of order, Mr Chair: Is that appropriate? I must admit that in the eight or nine bills I've sat through, when you get to clause-by-clause you deal with clause-by-clause. I thought the members had an obligation to inform themselves on the issues before they come to this table, that this is not debate. I am not being facetious when I say this.

Mr Marchese: On a point of order, Mr Chair.

Mr Gilchrist: Excuse me, but I'm making my point of order.

The Chair: We are already in a point of order.

Mr Gilchrist: It has always been my understanding, with clause-by-clause, that we merely speak to the motion before us as members and that when we are finished talking we have a vote on each motion. This is not a question of involving other guest speakers or any kind of research people. We're supposed to have done that before coming to the table today.

The Chair: We can either resolve this issue or we can just talk about it all day long. If legislative counsel is the person required to resolve the issue I suggest we wait for him. Mr Marchese, another point of order?

Mr Marchese: Yes. When we have a matter of disagreement it's very helpful to have someone who has more knowledge than we do to help us out. What Mr Gilchrist is saying is that we should do our reading, he's done his and we're all ready to go because he's the authority on this issue. I'm arguing on a point of order that we need him to —

The Chair: Yes, I think we will recess until we find the leg counsel, gentlemen.

The committee recessed from 1022 to 1025.

The Chair: We have found the expert who hopefully will clear up the confusion about this particular issue. Mr Marchese, why don't you ask the question that's causing the confusion and then we can get the definitive answer and get on with this.

Mr Marchese: Mr Gilchrist is not here. Should we wait for Mr Gilchrist?

Mr Fenson, I moved an amendment which reads:

"That clause 1(a) of the bill be repealed and the following substituted:

"(a) the assets and liabilities of labour unions, employees associations and public sector for-profit employers."

Mr Gilchrist says this is a redundant motion, that it's unnecessary to include "public sector for-profit employers" because they're already included in Bill 26. Our reading is that they were not included and that's why this motion is before us. Mr Gilchrist argues differently. Do you have any knowledge as to this issue one way or the other?

The Chair: I'm going to get Mr Gilchrist to make a point first.

Mr Gilchrist: If I can quote right from the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, "Public sector organizations and government ministries must disclose the names, positions and compensation to employees whose salary was \$100,000 or more in the previous calendar year." I jump down to the meaning of the word "public" in "public sector salaries." It specifically lists things such as Ontario Hydro, LCBO, Workers' Compensation Board, all crown corporations and agencies. It applies to "any organization that receives transfer payments from the province of at least \$1 million or 10% of its gross revenues if that amount is \$120,000 or more."

Whether or not you take my word, Mr Marchese, the exact wording in your motion 6, whoever drafted that, pulled it right out of that schedule in Bill 26. For your edification, if you would like to look through the listing of all hospitals, school boards, municipalities, universities, colleges, Ontario public sector, crown agencies and other public sector employers, I'd be pleased to share my copy of the printout that was sent to every member's office on March 31.

Mr Avrum Fenson: The only difference is the proposed amendment doesn't have the bottom threshold for what qualifies a public sector for-profit operation under Bill 26, where they have to receive at least \$120,000. Your amendment would include those that come under that threshold as well, so it's different in that regard.

Mr Gilchrist: Actually, it wouldn't, Mr Fenson. In motion 6 he further defines what he means by that.

Mr Fenson: I see.

Mr Gilchrist: To be fair to Mr Fenson, he's been asked a question and hasn't had the benefit of consulting their motion. If he wishes to consult motion 6 before phrasing his answer, I think that would be far fairer to the research officer.

Mr Fenson: It appears to me that the combination of the two motions covers the same ground as Bill 26.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, that answers the question.

Mr Marchese: One of our own researchers went to pick up Bill 26 so we would be able to comment on that.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, you asked for an expert opinion, and we got one that says this is redundant and it's already covered. Are you saying now that we need another expert opinion? Is that what you're asking?

Mr Marchese: I appreciate your comment and the way you phrased it. No, I didn't say I was looking for an expert opinion through my researcher but rather that our researcher went to get Bill 26 so he could pinpoint a matter that I wanted to speak to. I didn't say he was an expert.

The Chair: In the meantime that should end the discussion, I think, on this particular amendment because

the issue that was in dispute has been cleared up by leg counsel.

There being no further comment —

Mr Marchese: I want to speak to this.

The Chair: Anything to add over and above what's already been discussed, Mr Marchese?

Mr Marchese: I'm going to continue to speak to this amendment.

The Chair: Something new?

Mr Marchese: Yes, and then I want to ask Mr Fenson how I might word this to see if it fits.

During the Bill 26 discussions we were trying to move an amendment to close a loophole requiring disclosure of salaries over \$100,000, not by all private companies but only those receiving significant government funding. The Tory response was made by Mr Sampson, the member for Mississauga West, where he says the following:

"Private corporations are responsible solely to their shareholders. That's the nature of the private corporation setup. Public corporations are responsible to the public purse, and that's what this particular schedule is trying to do: to establish that responsibility, the reporting requirements with respect to how the moneys are used, and more specifically, as it relates to the schedule, how the moneys are used in the compensation of individuals.

"It would be inappropriate, in my view, to have a piece of legislation on the books that would, for instance, capture a large multinational corporation and force it to disclose salaries for activities that were not related whatsoever to the expenditure of government moneys. If they got a government grant for X amount of dollars, it could potentially capture them by the scope of the net that you've carved out here" — in response to Mr Silipo's attempt to make an amendment — and "I don't think that's appropriate."

What we have here is a private member's bill that would capture in the net all trade unions and employee associations whether or not they receive a penny of government funds. It seems appropriate for them to capture in the "net" — Mr Sampson's word — all the trade unions but it's inappropriate to try to cover anybody else. Our attempt, through this amendment, was to make sure that if we're going to do it, and that's all right, we cover everybody. I'm just wondering whether it would be appropriate for me just to take out "public sector" and put "for-profit employers." Mr Fenson, would that do it?

Mr Gilchrist: On a point of order, Mr Chair: It is totally inappropriate to ask the research officer for a legal opinion in the drafting of an amendment. If Mr Marchese wishes to have a vote on this one and introduce another amendment he's welcome to do that, but this is the motion that's before us right now.

The Chair: We should clear up that it's not leg counsel we're talking to here; it is the research people. I don't know whether that's a fair position or a fair question to ask.

Mr Fenson: Perhaps you should ask the clerk whether I should be asked that. I don't know that I should be deciding that.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, this is your particular amendment. We have heard all the discussions on the amendment. If it doesn't do what you want it to do, I

guess it's your responsibility to introduce a new amendment.

Mr Len Wood: I'd like to put a few comments on the record. The reason for this piece of legislation, Bill 53, being brought in, from what I understand, is that the member woke up one night and realized, in his opinion, that union leaders were not covered under Bill 26.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr Wood, are you speaking to this amendment?

Mr Len Wood: I'm speaking to this amendment under Bill 53.

As a result we have the bill and we have some amendments before us now that we think are very important to achieve the goal Mr Gilchrist wanted to achieve in bringing forward his bill — I used the example earlier — that Bill 26 does not cover. You have two nursing homes, one on one side of the street and one across the street. One is non-profit, the other one is private, and they're both getting the same amount of money. One has to disclose salaries of over \$100,000 of the top people and the other one does not have to. These same examples could be homes for the aged.

When Bill 26 was being drafted and brought forward, from what I can understand, Mr Gilchrist says there was a flaw. The working people who pay union dues into their unions are not being covered, even though we feel they were being covered under Bill 26. He's brought forward a bill. All we're saying is that some of these amendments we're bringing forward will achieve what his original request was, that you broaden the disclosure of non-profit and profit organizations and their top management people.

I can even go one step further in explaining: In Bill 26 the definition of "employer" means an employer in the public sector that does not carry on its activities for the purpose of gain or profit to its members or shareholders, and includes the crown and a body to which a person is elected or appointed under the authority of an act of Ontario." Clearly Bill 26 did not have everybody disclosing on an equal basis. If you make a dollar profit, you're treated in a different way than if you're non-profit, even though you might have two managers doing exactly the same jobs.

If Bill 53 is brought forward to bring more people under the net for disclosure — in our opinion, Bill 26 already covered all of the labour bodies that represent the ordinary working people in this province — we feel that some of the amendments that we're bringing forward, and the first one in particular, should be voted on and adopted to clarify what we think Bill 53 should mean for the ordinary working people out there in this province. There shouldn't be a class distinction between the public for-profit and private sectors.

Mr Marchese: I want to ask Mr Fenson again for clarification purposes, does Bill 26 cover trade unions? I think you commented the last time. Could you comment on that again?

Mr Fenson: Bill 26? I wouldn't think it covers trade unions.

Mr Marchese: The point I want to make is that if Mr Gilchrist thinks that Bill 26 already covers public sector for-profit employers and that this might be redundant, I

appreciate that. We thought, through the discussions that went on through Bill 26 and all the hearings that people were part of — I was only part of that for a day or two and here and there — that public sector for-profit employers were not covered. That's what we had heard then. We're told by Mr Gilchrist now that they are covered.

It would certainly please us to have them included. If it's simply a matter of redundancy and he feels they're already covered, then he shouldn't have any objections — he or they — to include it, given that in his view they're already covered. This would give us reassurance that this is the case, and it certainly doesn't take away from the fact that they may already be covered elsewhere. Why would that be a problem to the member or the members? A comment from them would be appreciated.

Mr Gilchrist: I've already stated my position. I can't conceive that any responsible legislator would want to create the potential confusion of having two different bills say exactly the same thing, for the obvious reason that if at some point in the future someone makes an amendment to one of those bills and forgets that there was a parallel piece of legislation, you will have created a source of confusion where none need exist. I don't think there has been any doubt. I have read right from the précis of the bill. The research officer has stated unequivocally that the way the NDP has phrased this motion and defined the public sector for-profit employers is exactly taken from Bill 26.

If the member could tell me one time during the five years he was on this side of the table that he passed a second bill that was completely redundant with something else he had done, perhaps he could put those two bill numbers into the record right now and cite the precedent. I can't believe he would want to take the time of the staff and the members debating something that was already on the statute books. It's totally unnecessary, it's totally irresponsible, and I think it just creates a myriad of potential problems whereas right now it couldn't be clearer; it took Mr Fenson mere seconds once he saw the definition written in your motion 6 to say that this is exactly the same thing.

1040

Mr Marchese: The word "irresponsible" is a bit heavy and unnecessary. If you add some language that may be similar to other language that's elsewhere, or might be redundant, it's hardly irresponsible. I would add that I have been known, from time to time, to say that where it gives some people assurances I have no problem saying, "Let's repeat it," or, "Let's say it." Personally, I have done that in the past in a number of different areas, and I would do so again where it gives other people assurances of what they need. Obviously, that is not what Mr Gilchrist's position would be on this matter, but I certainly hold to that.

I asked Mr Fenson a question the last time we had a meeting here. I said that Mr Ross McClellan "makes other arguments and says that the labour movement is fully covered by the provisions of Bill 26 already, and 'Bill 53 is not a simple extension of the provisions of the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act at all.'" I asked Mr Fenson, "Does your research cover this particular matter?" He answered:

"It's covered in the same sense that under the statute created by Bill 26, if the government grant is high enough or if it's a high enough proportion of a union's revenue, then it probably would be considered, but that means there are unions which are not covered. I have not had the time since I was asked the second question this morning to identify unions which may be brought into the act by virtue of the size of the grant. I'm not even sure there are any direct grants to unions which would bring them under the provisions of Bill 26. It may be that there are no unions which have to report their executive salaries because of Bill 26."

Mr Fenson, was there some doubt there perhaps that there might be and that you hadn't done enough research? That's why I asked you again.

Mr Fenson: What I'm saying is that unions are not specifically addressed. It is possible, as I said in the spring. There's nothing in Bill 26 to exclude a union if it does get a government grant, but unions are not specifically included. I was simply stating as a matter of fact that I didn't think that unions generally got the kinds of direct grants that would bring them under Bill 26.

Mr Marchese: But we don't really know because we haven't done the research to know whether or not that's the case.

Mr Gilchrist: Excuse me. The printout of everyone who should have been covered is in this publication of March 31. What possible doubt can you have about the intent of Bill 26? After all the time and effort you people put into arguing against it, presumably you read it. Again, we're asking Mr Fenson a terribly unfair question. The philosophical question has been answered. If a trade union gets a grant — and again I quote right from the Minister of Finance — "it applies to any" — let me make that very clear — "any organization that receives transfer payments from the province of at least \$1 million or 10% of its gross revenues if that amount is \$120,000 or more" — anybody. I don't think it is fair to pose a question to Mr Fenson to go through and now name which union may have got that. If there was a union, it would be in there.

Mr Len Wood: Maybe research can help me with this, but during the public hearings that we had in June, when presentations were brought forward, there were some comments made that there was no reason for this particular bill at all because the Labour Relations Act of Ontario, under subsection 92(1), covers this: "Every trade union shall upon the request of any member furnish the member, without charge, with a copy of the audited financial statement of its affairs to the end of its last fiscal year...." The argument is that you have a bill being brought forward where everything that is being requested is already covered under the Labour Relations Act.

Mr Gilchrist: On another point of order, Mr Chair: Can we get Mr Wood here? It is the right of this committee to have him, and I feel personally slighted that just because it's a private member's bill I guess no one thought it important enough to have him present today. Obviously, if we are going to ask legal questions, he should come. If Mr Fenson has it within his knowledge to give the answer, that's fine.

The fact of the matter is that you've just answered your own question — if a member asks. This bill does not make any member have to expose himself to the vitriol and intimidation of other people. It is a matter of law. If this bill were to pass, every union would have to disclose its statements, just like every publicly traded company, without being asked.

Mr Len Wood: I'm surprised that the Chair would allow a member to rudely interrupt during the comments I was making and take over.

The Chair: We're going to see if Mr Wood is available. We'll recess until we get an answer on that.

The committee recessed from 1046 to 1108.

The Chair: Okay, we'll get back to business here. We have Mr Wood with us now, legislative counsel, who can possibly clear up the confusion about this particular amendment for us. Mr Wood, you understand the cause of the confusion. Would you like somebody to ask you a question? Would you prefer it done that way?

Mr Gilchrist: It might be fairer that way. I think you had specific questions.

The Chair: Okay, maybe Mr Marchese could ask Mr Wood a question.

Mr Marchese: Our amendment to this bill, if you have a copy of that, "the assets and liabilities of labour unions, employees associations and public sector for-profit employers" is what we're trying to add in. They argue that public sector for-profit employers are included in Bill 26; we thought, then, that they weren't. We still have doubts and so we wanted to have a legal opinion from you as to whether that's the case or not.

Mr Michael Wood: I have to preface any opinion that I give by saying that I can give you my reading of it and help you to try to understand it, but since the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act is passed and is administered by a ministry of the government, it would ultimately be the legal staff of that ministry who would give an opinion on exactly how it is to be interpreted.

Mr Marchese: I understand.

Mr Michael Wood: Having said that, it appears to me that the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act contains a number of limitations, and one of them is that the employers in the public sector who have the obligation to disclose salaries paid to their employees are limited to employers, according to the definition of "employer" in that act, that do not carry on activities for the purpose of gain or profits to their members or shareholders.

Interjection.

Mr Gilchrist: Hold on, the second half of the clause is reading —

The Chair: Let Mr Wood finish, please.

Mr Michael Wood: There are a number of limitations, but that is one of them. "Public sector" is a defined term as well, which has a very extensive definition in that act. But the fact remains that there is that one overriding limitation that it does not target employers in the public sector who carry on their activities for the purpose of gain to their members.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm going to have to ask you to then go to the definition of "public sector" because we just looked at this. I would ask the members to realize what it is the NDP has put in here, "public sector for-profit."

Any business that the government sets up is done as a crown agency. The bill specifically says "all crown agencies."

I did not want to get into imputing motives, but this is somewhat cutesy in the sense that you cannot be in the public sector and have shareholders, so the definition that Mr Wood was alluding to goes on to say "shareholders."

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, with all due respect, I'd like to hear it from the staff, not from the member.

Mr Marchese: That's fine. I understand what he's saying.

Interjection.

The Chair: When it's your turn, I'll let you talk.

Mr Gilchrist: It's quite unfair to Mr Wood to ask him, on 30 seconds' notice, to try to come up with the names of all the crown agencies that would or would not be covered. But as a matter of principle — and again, I would invite the member opposite to give me the specific enterprise he's alluding to. If it exists with the potential to make money, the ROM, the Ontario Science Centre, Ontario Place, the Ontario Clean Water Agency, every single one of those is covered in Bill 26, because it specifically says that the public sector or any crown agency and any enterprise the government has set up that is in the public good is covered.

You would have us believe that somehow you can be in the public sector and yet still have shareholders; you can't be. If you have shareholders, you're in the private sector, so the entire motion is, forgive me, somewhat illogical. I would invite the member, rather than waste any more time of the committee on very interesting philosophical arguments, to give a specific instance of where you could be in the public sector and earn profit for your members; not the taxpayers of Ontario, for your members. That would be like the ROM making money for the members of the ROM Foundation or a hospital making money for the hospital foundation or Ontario Place making money for its board of directors. It doesn't do that. There is not one public sector enterprise that makes money that is not a crown agency or incorporated under some other statute, which is covered in Bill 26.

If you want, I would invite Mr Wood to read the definition for "public sector" if you have any doubt or invite you to come and look at the copy of his bill, because it says exactly what I have just said to you. If you don't have a specific reference, I submit to you that you cannot be in the public sector and have shareholders.

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure that our amendment is illogical. He can use whatever words he wants. It's not illogical whatsoever; it's not even philosophical. They make a point; we're making a point. I looked at the definition of "employer" that Mr Wood was alluding to. I had underlined it. That's why I said it didn't include what we have here. I will read it again.

"Employer" means an employer in the public sector that does not carry on its activities for the purpose of gain or profit to its members or shareholders...." so it includes shareholders as well. We were trying to get that language, "that does not carry on its activities for the purpose of gain or profit to its members or shareholders" out of that definition. They defeated that. So we're trying to include in this bill this very language. We think it's

appropriate to do that so that if there is any for-profit employer who has dealings with the government, in whatever way — I don't have to give him a specific. That's not my duty necessarily to give him a specific example. It's not my role necessarily to do that. He doesn't need to know what are the specific entities, such as a nursing home or others, that I need to cover the list for. It's not something I think I need to do necessarily to convince him.

What we want to do here is be inclusive. He's saying: "No. Crown corporation types of entities are all that matter to us." That's what he's saying, and I'm saying we need to go beyond that so that any for-profit employer who's connected and does business with the government should be included in that definition of "employer." He's trying to create his own definition of "employer," and he's saying: "Employer is crown corporation. We're done. Anybody else who makes a profit who has dealings with the government, we don't need to do that. We don't need to get involved with that. It's illogical," he says. For me, that kind of thinking isn't very logical, to be frank. They want their own definition of "employer," and we're trying to say, "Let's make sure we define 'employer' in a way that includes for-profit as well."

Mr Wood has identified this clearly as a serious limitation. Mr Gilchrist argues against it because he's got his own reasons. We disagree with them. That's why we argue we need to include this definition here. We have no problem with public disclosure whatsoever. We think it's a good thing.

Mr Grandmaître: Let it all hang out.

Mr Marchese: But we also want to make sure that we include public sector for-profit employers as well, so that they're not excluded, so that we don't get into the argument, as Mr Sampson did — and I read that into the record — that it would be unfair because the net would be big. Well, they have no problem in creating a net for all unions —

Mr Young: They're non-profit.

Mr Marchese: — but they do have a problem to create a net for the others. I think our amendment is quite in order, and I would urge him, if he thinks we're covered in this definition, to support it as it is here.

The Chair: Mr Sergio, you were next. Did you have a comment?

Mr Sergio: The definition that's in the amendment here, is that covered or included in Bill 26?

Mr Michael Wood: Could you repeat that, please.

Mr Sergio: This amendment here, from 1 to 4, with respect to the public sector for-profit employers.

Mr Michael Wood: Oh, the motions made by the New Democratic Party?

Mr Sergio: Yes.

Mr Michael Wood: No, it would appear not to be. It would appear that the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act does not cover what the NDP motions are covering. That is all I am saying. I can't comment on the policy, whether it's serious or whatever.

Mr Sergio: Are we saying then that the motion is in order?

Mr Michael Wood: It is not for me to rule on whether the motions are in order.

Mr Sergio: But if it's not included in Bill 26, if it's not covered by Bill 26, then it would be proper. It is properly put and makes sense if he wants to include it.

Mr Michael Wood: I can say this, that if it were included in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, then we couldn't put it in this bill, because the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act has already passed, and there is a rule of the Legislature that once you pass something —

Mr Sergio: All right, it has been passed, but it does not include —

Mr Michael Wood: But you're right. I said that the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act done by Bill 26 does not include what the NDP motions are seeking to include in Bill 53.

Mr Grandmaître: After listening to Mr Wood's and Mr Gilchrist's arguments, I'm totally confused, for the simple reason that we asked Mr Wood to be present to clarify or to give us a better definition of "public sector," if it was included in Bill 26. As far as Mr Wood is concerned, it is not included in Bill 26. Then the amendment is in order; then we should take the vote. Let's get on.

The Chair: No further comment? Mr Wood.

Mr Len Wood: I was cut off earlier in my comments that what we have here, from the presentations we had during the public hearings, is a piece of legislation that has really no business being brought forward on that because what is being asked for here is covered under subsection 92(1) of the Labour Relations and Employment Statute Law Amendment Act. The employees' associations and unions, whether it be the OFL, CLC or any other unions, make public to their members what the salaries are and how much they're paid. We have really a singling out of one section that represents the ordinary working people in this province that is already covered under the Labour Relations Act.

As a result, we're saying in our amendments that if this particular group of people is being singled out, there are other groups out there that in the future may receive large amounts of funding from the government. We give all kinds of examples of that, nursing homes being one. Right across the street from each other, one is non-profit, the other one is for-profit and privately run. One has to disclose, the other one doesn't have to disclose. Homes for the aged: The same thing could apply. One private and one non-profit, receiving exactly the same dollars from the government, from the taxpayers, and being treated in a different manner.

The amendments all the way through are saying if you're going to single out one particular group of people who are, in my opinion, as I was a union member for years and years, in a democratic process — to be singling out and disposing of them in a special piece of legislation, well, we should be covering all of them. But we know from Bill 26 that Mr Sampson says: "Well, it would be very unfair to extend the net out to disclose the salaries of companies. No matter how much money they receive from the government, it would be very unfair to cover them in the net under Bill 26." Now we're getting arguments that this one here, Bill 53, shouldn't be extended to cover. No matter how many millions of dollars the government might be giving to different

employers out there, we shouldn't have to disclose their salaries. Our argument is that they should all be covered and brought under the net and we should not just target the representatives of the ordinary working people in this province.

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): It seems to me that if this motion is out of order, then all of this debate is for naught. The consensus seems to be that the motion is in order; therefore I suggest that we ask the question. If the motion's in order, I say we vote on it. If it's out of order, I don't even know why we're talking about it. So I move that we ask the question.

The Chair: The motion is in order, and in my opinion there has been sufficient debate on it, so the question I ask the committee is, shall I put the question? All those in favour?

Mr Len Wood: I would ask for a delay in the time, Mr Chair. I would ask for an adjournment for —

The Chair: All those opposed? Okay, the question is carried, so —

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): I'm calling for a recess to acquire members of the caucus, please; 20 minutes, as per the rules.

Interjection: Not in the middle of a vote.

Mr Kormos: You bet your boots.

The Chair: What we're now doing is putting the question on the amendment.

Mr Kormos: I'm requesting a 20-minute recess for the NDP caucus to gather its members.

The Chair: The New Democrats have requested a 20-minute recess. We're recessed for 20 minutes.

The committee recessed from 1125 to 1146.

The Chair: Shall the amendment proposed by Mr Marchese pass? All those in favour?

Mr Marchese: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Grandmaître, Marchese, Sergio, Len Wood.

Nays

Gilchrist, Hardeman, Pettit, Ross, Stewart, Young.

The Chair: The amendment is defeated. Any further amendments to section 1?

Mr Marchese: I move that clause 1(b) of the bill be amended by striking out "and employees associations" in the second line and substituting "employees associations and public sector for-profit employers".

The Chair: Basically the arguments are the same as what we've just been through for the last hour and a half on the previous amendment?

Mr Marchese: You're right, but you can never say enough on this.

The Chair: Is there anything new to add?

Mr Marchese: For me, what we are doing here is a bit of a problem because it appears, obviously, that it suits the government to exclude the public sector for-profit employers, and I think that's one-sided.

Mr Young: It's not new; we've heard it before.

The Chair: Mr Marchese has the floor.

Mr Marchese: I realize it's not new to them, but we need to make the arguments, because what they're doing

is singling out unions. That's what they've done by doing this.

Mr Young: This isn't new.

Mr Marchese: I know it's not new, Mr Young, to you at least, but I think we need this for the record.

Mr Young: We heard this before.

Mr Marchese: I realize, but I'm adding to this argument. If you do what you have done and continue to defeat all of these amendments, what you are doing is simply saying, "We, the Conservative-Tory-Reform government, are interested in capturing only unions in the net. That's all that matters to us. We want disclosure of their salaries, of all union-connected folks, because that's really what matters. We want to put that on the record for people so they know, so they can go and get these disclosures wherever they want," in some convenient place and so on.

I think it's a problem because if you simply talk about unions and do not talk about other sectors of the population, then you really are attacking one sector. We're not against this, but we want it to be more inclusive. That's why we've tried to add this language. It is clear that what they've proposed does not include the public sector for-profit employers. They quite intentionally excluded them because they don't want them to be a part of this kind of private member's bill.

I think they're making a serious mistake, because it will be seen for what it is: an attack on unions. That's what this bill is all about: an attack on labour unions. We've seen their attacks on many other areas. The Employment Standards Act changes are going to be hurtful to many people who don't have unions. We've seen the changes they made to labour laws that attack unions in general, allowing scabs to enter the workplace. There's a pattern here, and the pattern is quite clear: It assaults all unions and people connected to labour in that way.

Why they would refuse to make it a more inclusive thing that would look good on Mr Gilchrist and the other members to do, so that they are not seen not to be addressing the other part of what this bill should contain — I think it's not good. It looks bad on this member and this government to do that. So, Mr Chair, this motion is before you.

Mr Len Wood: On that amendment, I want to reaffirm the position that we've taken. Labour unions are democratic organizations, and the officers and the people from the shop floor right up to the senior officers are all elected in a democratic process and are covered under section 92 of the act.

In this particular amendment that we're bringing forward, rather than single out a particular group of people who are operating democratic organizations — and their salaries and benefits that they receive are all covered under the Labour Relations Act now — if we're going to expand what the member wants in Bill 26 by bringing in Bill 53, we're saying the amendments we're bringing forward would help to expand that. If people are not satisfied within the membership, they can appeal. The appeal process is there that they go to the Labour Relations Board under subsection 92(1) and demand that the union follows the law and declares the salaries.

You'll see in the amendments that we've brought forward all the way through is the question, why target one particular group of democratic organizations and not include other organizations where all or part of their funds may be from taxpayers or from the government and for-profit? Why shouldn't non-profit and for-profit companies or organizations be all treated in the same way?

We heard the arguments from the parliamentary assistant during Bill 26 that it would be very unfair to extend that net any further, and yet now we see Bill 53 being brought forward and saying they want to extend the net that Bill 26, in his mind, doesn't cover, even though it is covered under the Labour Relations Act. We're saying, if you're going to extend that net, let's extend the net farther to cover some of the examples I gave. If you have a for-profit nursing home on one side of the street and across the street you have a non-profit one, why should they not be treated in the same way as far as disclosure of salaries is concerned? They're both receiving identical, in some cases probably the exact same amount from the taxpayers or from the province of Ontario.

We're determined to continue the argument that some of these amendments we brought forward are very important. There is no fear of the unions or the labour organization disclosing the salaries. That's not the point. The point is that the feeling is they're being targeted under another piece of legislation, Bill 53, when they are already covered under the Labour Relations Act, which is satisfactory for the democratic organization that is out there. As far as I know, and I've been a member of the labour movement for over 30 years, they operate in a democratic fashion and follow the law.

They have democratic elections. They have the conventions. Whether it be at the local level or on a bigger scale for the OFL or CLC, the disclosures are there. I used to have a constitution booklet and local bylaw booklets, and all of the salaries, whether it be at the local level or at the national representative level or whether it be the president of the union, they were all available to the ordinary working people in this province who were paying membership dues to their unions. As I said before, if we're going to expand Bill 53 to capture those, we should also expand it to capture some of the for-profit employers or associations that are receiving public money.

Mr Young: With respect to the members opposite, the meaning of this motion is exactly the same as the first motion. The arguments you're hearing are exactly the same. I'd like to move we call the question.

The Chair: I think it's just a little bit premature. Mr Grandmaître has asked to make a comment on it. It's almost 12 o'clock. We'll allow a little more discussion.

Mr Grandmaître: I was going to say just about the same thing. We'll be hearing the same speeches against or for. I don't want to prolong the debate and I don't want to cut debate, but if this amendment is in order, and it is in order, I think we should stop debating and get on with the vote.

The Chair: You're requesting that —

Mr Grandmaître: We should take the vote.

The Chair: The question has been asked, should we put the vote. All those in favour of the Chair asking the question? Opposed? Okay.

Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Shall section 1 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 1 is carried.

We will recess. Just a reminder: There is a subcommittee meeting at 3:15 for Bill 81.

The committee recessed from 1156 to 1646.

The Chair: We are back in clause-by-clause discussion. Are there any amendments to section 2?

Mr Gilchrist: I move that the definition of "labour union" in section 2 of the bill be amended by adding at the end "and includes a local labour union and a parent labour union."

The reason for this very simple amendment: Legal counsel informed me that under the Labour Relations Act there is a definition for both local and parent labour unions, and so to make sure that I was using a term consistent with the Labour Relations Act I make this simple amendment.

Mr Sergio: Are there any affiliated unions?

Mr Gilchrist: Yes. As a concept there are union affiliations, but under our act we don't use the word "affiliation"; it's called either a local or a parent. What you and I would know as an affiliate is really, under the act, called a local.

Mr Sergio: All right. Would Bill 26 also take this into consideration?

Mr Gilchrist: This really has nothing to do with Bill 26.

Mr Sergio: Just globally.

Mr Gilchrist: In using the words "labour union," I should have been more precise and said "a local labour union and a parent labour union," okay?

The Chair: Mr Marchese, we started just a little bit ahead of you. We're looking at Mr Gilchrist's motion, an amendment to section 2. I presume you don't have any problem with that.

Mr Marchese: Hold on, please. Are we at 2a?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr Marchese: Sorry, what was your explanation of that?

Mr Gilchrist: Legal counsel informed me, after the bill was finished and presented, that I should have been more specific and used the two terms that are found in all of our labour codes: "a local labour union and a parent labour union." That's the only difference there.

The Chair: All in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

Mr Gilchrist: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following definitions:

"local labour union" means a local trade union within the meaning of subsection 145(1) of the Labour Relations Act, 1995; ('syndicat local')

"parent labour union" means a parent trade union within the meaning of subsection 145(1) of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 ('syndicat local').

Again, this is exactly the same thing and was just a requirement to pull into this bill the definitions from the Labour Relations Act.

The Chair: Any questions? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment is carried.

I have an amendment from the New Democrats, amendment number 4, that is out of order because it's tied directly to a previous amendment that did not carry. The same thing applies to the next amendment put forward by the New Democrats, number 5, and to the next one, number 6.

Mr Marchese: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Funding received from government

"(2) A labour union, employees association or public sector for-profit employer is included in the definition of 'labour union,' 'employees association' or 'public sector'" —

The Chair: Mr Marchese, I believe you're reading from the one that I ruled out of order.

Mr Marchese: Sorry. Number 6?

The Chair: No, number 8. Number 6 is out of order.

Mr Marchese: I didn't hear you say that. Could you explain why 6 is out of order?

The Chair: Number 6 is out of order because it's tied directly to a previous motion that was defeated, because of the reference to "public sector for-profit employer." You have substituted an additional —

Mr Marchese: Could I ask the clerk, you find nothing different in this motion?

Clerk of the Committee: The second motion does not contain the reference to the public sector for-profit employer.

The Chair: So the one numbered 8 is the one we should be dealing with.

Mr Marchese: I was asking the clerk whether she felt that motion is different from everything else that has been presented. You're ruling it out of order.

The Chair: I'm ruling the one numbered 6 out of order.

Mr Marchese: I understand. I'm asking the clerk whether —

Clerk of the Committee: I'm not ruling; the Chair rules.

The Chair: I made the ruling that number 6 is out of order.

Mr Marchese: The Chair ruled that and I want to ask the clerk whether, in her opinion —

Clerk of the Committee: I'm not free to give that opinion, Rosario.

Mr Marchese: You're not?

The Chair: Number 6 is ruled out of order and now we're on to number 8.

Interjection.

The Chair: They're out of order. Number 4, number 5 and number 6 are all out of order for the reason that they deal with the motion that was previously defeated. Now, Mr Marchese, we're on the one numbered 8.

Mr Marchese: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Funding received from government

"(2) A labour union or employees association is included in the definition of 'labour union' or 'employees association' as the case may be, in a year only if it received funding from the government of Ontario in that year of an amount that is at least equal to,

"(a) \$1,000,000; or

"(b) 10% of its gross revenues for the year if the funding is \$120,000 or more.

"Proof of percentage of funding

"(3) The Management Board of Cabinet may require an officer, director or employee of a labour union or employees association to provide evidence satisfactory to the Secretary of the Management Board of Cabinet that the funding that the labour union or employees association received from the government of Ontario in a year is less than 10% of its gross revenues for the year, if, for the year,

"(a) it received funding from the government of Ontario of less than \$1,000,000 and at least \$120,000;

"(b) it has not made available to the public a statement or record as required by section 3, 4 or 5; and

"(c) this act would apply to it if its funding from the government of Ontario for the year were at least 10% of its gross revenues for the year.

"Failure to provide evidence

"(4) If a labour union or employees association does not provide the satisfactory evidence required by subsection (3), the Management Board of Cabinet may direct a ministry of the crown to withhold payments that it makes to the labour union or employees association to fund an activity or program of the labour union or employees association, and section 5 applies, with necessary modifications, in respect of the payment withheld."

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Is there anyplace in this bill that gives the definition of "employees association"?

Mr Gilchrist: Yes.

Mr Stewart: Can you tell me where?

Mr Gilchrist: It's in section 2: "'employees association' means an association of employees that is recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent of the employees in an agreement in writing between the employees and their employer that sets out the terms of employment of the employees."

Interjection.

Mr Stewart: Please don't tell me just to carry on. This could have a major impact on —

Mr Gilchrist: That's taken from the Labour Relations Act, the definition, Gary.

Mr Stewart: I think it's pretty broad, in my mind. I'll leave it that way.

The Chair: Any further comment? All those in favour of the amendment?

Mr Marchese: A recorded vote, Mr Chair.

Ayes

Marchese, Sergio.

Nays

Gilchrist, Hardeman, Ross, Stewart, Young.

The Chair: The amendment is defeated.

Seeing no further amendments to section 2, shall section 2, as amended, carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 2, as amended, carries.

Section 3: I have several amendments from the New Democrats — numbers 10, 11, 12, 13 — that are all out

of order, for the reasons given for previous ones being out of order, that they are tied directly to an amendment that was already defeated. Any further amendments to section 3? Seeing none, shall section 3 carry? All those in favour —

Mr Marchese: Mr Chair, I'd like to speak to some of those issues.

Interjections.

The Chair: I was a little quick and I changed my mind. Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: I just want to go over some of this because I have some trouble with most of them. "Not later than March 31 of each year beginning with the year 1997, every labour union and employees association shall make available for inspection by the public without charge an audited statement on its financial affairs to the end of its last fiscal year ending in the previous year."

This is more offensive to me, having lost the other amendment we were trying to put in there, because if you then put the responsibility on unions to do this and you do not do the same for the public sector for-profit employer, I've got a real problem with that. This is why we're very concerned that this government isn't satisfied with stripping away union rights: making it harder to join a union and giving employers more power over workers. They then move from that and they come to things like this. The impression they give to those following this issue, and there probably aren't too many except those who are interested in this, is that the unions are not following due process. What the unions are doing, similar to what the Tories speak about in terms of the private sector, is that they are accountable to their members, and those members who wish to see their audited statements can do so. The Tories argue that it would be unfair to include the private sector in all of this, and Mr Sampson spoke to it where he says:

"It would be inappropriate, in my view, to have a piece of legislation on the books that would, for instance, capture a large multinational corporation and force it to disclose salaries for activities that were not related whatsoever to the expenditure of government moneys. If they got a government grant for X amount of dollars, it could potentially capture them by the scope of the net that you've carved out here."

If this motion we had captured them, then in my view that's fine. If they have the nerve to be able to say, "We want to capture all unions and we want to, in 3(1), make sure they make available for inspection by the public without charge an audited statement," when they say that's all right, the cost to the union to make it available to the public at their expense, "but it's not all right to do the same for the for-profit sector as it may connect to the government," I find that objectionable. I really do. They don't find it objectionable to say what Mr Gilchrist puts in 3(1), but I find it very objectionable. I don't like it. They single out all of the unions in this way, making it appear that there is a real problem here: They're not accountable. But in the same way they argue that the private sector is accountable to its shareholders, why isn't it all right for unions to be accountable to their stakeholders?

1700

Mr Young: They don't pay taxes —

Mr Marchese: They are accountable to their stakeholders in the same way that the shareholder presumably is accountable to theirs.

Mr Young says they don't pay taxes — and I'm not sure quite what I heard. Look at the banks. Banks run our lives with all of the money they take from us, and it is our money that they use. Do the banks then become accountable to us for the money that they use, where 90% of the deposits that go into those banks are ours? Not the shareholders. In fact, the shareholders of the bank contribute 10% of their own private money. The rest of the money is the public's. Do they make themselves accountable to us? Do they provide an audited statement that is available to us, or legible or readable to the rest of the public, where they use our money for the interest of the 10% that is the shareholders? They don't do that. Why shouldn't we be making them accountable to us in the same way that we force all of the unions to do that? I find it objectionable.

I don't like the way subsection 3(1) reads. I could have lived with it if we captured in the net the for-profit sector, because if you can do it for one, if you can force it with your numbers on the unions, then I say force it on the for-profit sector. I would have lived with that, but to simply single out one sector and not the other because of your ideology, I just can't support it.

I'm speaking to subsection 3(1), Mr Chair. Shall I do that for (2), (3) (4), or how do you wish to proceed?

The Chair: We vote on the whole section as a section, so if you have some more comments on the section.

Mr Marchese: I want to read through the different sections.

Subsection 3(2): "The statement shall be certified by the treasurer or any other officer of the labour union or employees association responsible for the handling and administration of its funds." That's fine.

Subsection 3(3): "The statement shall indicate the year to which the information in it relates and shall list the assets and liabilities of the labour union or employees association in accordance with the standards that may be prescribed by the regulations made under this act." Okay.

Subsection 3(4): "A labour union or employees association required by this section to make a statement available to the public by March 31 in a given year shall allow the public to inspect it without charge at a suitable location on the premises of the labour union or employees association at any time during the normal working hours of the labour union or employees association throughout the period beginning March 31 and ending on March 30 of the following year." Same problem I've got with this in terms of the "allow the public to inspect it without charge." There are two problems here.

The union has to pick up the cost, which makes it appear like they've got loads of money. It's all right if we waste the union's money because we don't really give a damn, and that's a problem. They don't seem to mind that the union will bear the cost of this particular problem because I don't think they care whether the unions are impoverished by it or not, that they have to spend some

money doing that or not, because I presume they would argue it's for the public interest. That's why they say "at a suitable location on the premises of the labour union." Oh yea, "the public to inspect it without charge."

Again, if we had built into this the for-profit sector I would have lived with it because the conditions would be the same, even if I find them a bit objectionable. But there is no balance here. In fact, there is a bias against unions. And there's no attempt to say, "Yea, it might be a reasonable thing to try to capture within the same net the for-profit sector." So I've got a problem there. So that's subsection 3(4).

I would really like to hear from the government members on this matter so that I have a sense of what they think about the comments I made.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese. Any further comment?

Mr Sergio: I have a question of Mr Marchese here with respect to the inspection of statements for different — whatever. Do you think that it's required, a notification period, or an in-writing request, or just barge in, say any time during working hours? Do you think it requires some time notification, let's say 24 hours, say by letter; anything at all?

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure. What he writes here is "to make a statement available to the public by March 31."

Mr Sergio: I'm reading from your amendment here.

Mr Marchese: My amendment? Which amendment?

The Chair: There is no amendment here. We're dealing with a section. There are no amendments to the section.

Mr Marchese: There is no amendment to this particular section. I'm speaking to the section and I'm just —

Mr Sergio: Okay, section, yes.

Mr Marchese: On this section there is no amendment.

The Chair: There is no amendment to this section.

Mr Marchese: I'm just speaking to their motions and I'm speaking to what I find objectionable.

Mr Sergio: Is this an NDP motion? What is this?

The Chair: Yes, that's to section 4. Is that number 14?

Mr Sergio: I'm on 13.

The Chair: Number 13 is out of order.

Mr Marchese: That's section 4. This is subsection 3(4).

Mr Sergio: Okay, I'm on 13; I'm sorry.

The Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favour —

Mr Marchese: Recorded vote.

The Chair: — of the section, recorded vote, section 3.

Ayes

Danford, Gilchrist, Hardeman, Ross, Stewart, Young.

Nays

Marchese, Sergio.

The Chair: Section 3 is carried.

Mr Gilchrist: I move that section 4 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Same, parent labour union

"(1.1) Not later than March 31 of each year beginning with the year 1997, every parent labour union shall make available for inspection by the public without charge a written record of the amount of salary and benefits that the parent labour union and its local labour unions in aggregate paid in the previous year to or in respect of an employee to whom they in aggregate paid at least \$100,000 as salary."

Just to speak briefly to this, again, legal counsel advised that rather than just say "labour union," there was a need to specify that under the Labour Relations Act there are both parent labour unions and local labour unions. It clearly is the intent that whatever aggregate salary is paid should be the amount that forms the basis of determining whether someone should have their salary disclosed, no different than it is in the public sector. I'm sure the members opposite would agree we would not want to be treating someone differently whether they work for the parent organization or for one of the locals. This ensures that there is that strict definition of both parent and local in the act.

The Chair: Any further comment? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Any further amendments to section 4?

Mr Marchese: I want to speak to section 4.

The Chair: Before you do that, Mr Marchese, as you know I have several amendments — 21, 22, 23 — that are all out of order, for the reasons given before.

Interjection.

The Chair: Sorry, my mistake. Numbers 13 to 19 are out of order. Now we have number 20, which is Mr Gilchrist's amendment.

1710

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Chair. Sorry, I didn't want to presume to leap ahead until you'd made your ruling.

I move that section 4 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Same, parent labour union

"(3.1) For any year beginning in the year 1996 in which a parent labour union and its local labour unions have no employees to whom they in aggregate paid at least \$100,000 as salary, the parent labour union shall, not later than March 31 of the following year, make available for inspection by the public without charge a written statement, certified by its highest ranking officer, that the parent trade union and its local trade unions in aggregate paid no employees in the year a salary of \$100,000 or more."

Again, this is consistent with the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, which merely acts as a test to ensure that every organization has in fact reviewed the process and has satisfied itself that there are no members who qualify, who reached that threshold. Again, the change from what is in the act itself is merely to define that there are parent labour unions and local labour unions and to give that definition here in the act.

The Chair: Any comment on that amendment? All those in favour? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Now there are amendments 21, 22 and 23 put forward by Mr Marchese that are out of order. Mr Marchese, you had some comments on section 4.

Mr Marchese: I just want to go back to what Mr Ross McClellan said to this committee on June 27 because, as he stated, and I'm in full agreement with what he said — I fully support the principle of financial accountability. I think we should all have a good sense of what people are making. I think it's good. I don't believe it should be just for the public sector and unions. I really believe it should be for the for-profit sector as well. That's why I am a bit upset about having to support this particular bill, because it's one-sided and it's an attack on labour unions. That's really what it's all about.

Mr Ross McClellan said the following in committee, and I happen to agree with most of what he says, on the issue of accountability, on the principle of financial disclosure: "In many labour organizations the salary of officers is disclosed as a constitutional requirement." The way it's presented in this bill makes it appear that they don't do that and that the unions are not accountable to their members. What he said in that statement is that not only does he support disclosure, but they are required to do so constitutionally.

"To cite just one example, the constitution of the Ontario Federation of Labour, in articles 6, 7 and 8, states and lists the salaries of its three full-time officers, and for your information, our president, Gord Wilson, is paid \$81,000 per annum." So they have no problem telling you what the salary is. "I'm aware that the constitution of the United Steelworkers also — the salary of the officers is set in convention by the membership elected to the convention.

"Labour unions are democratic organizations. The officers of the unions, from the shop floor to the senior officers, are elected by secret ballot vote of the membership and, as is the case with all elected officials, including yourselves, they're fully accountable to their constituents for their actions....

"The bill basically does two things: (1) It requires labour unions to make available to the public without charge an annual statement of their assets and liabilities..., and (2) an annual record of the names, positions, salaries and benefits of employees who receive more than \$100,000 a year. That's the second provision of the bill."

He speaks to the first requirement and says: "I refer you to section 92 of the Labour Relations Act of Ontario, the section entitled 'Duty of union to furnish financial statements to members.' Section 92(1): 'Every trade union shall upon the request of any member furnish the member, without charge, with a copy of the audited financial statement of its affairs to the end of its last fiscal year,' and it goes on to detail the requirement.

"Subsection (2): 'Where a member of a trade union complains that an audited financial statement is inadequate, the board' — that is, the Ontario Labour Relations Board — 'may inquire into the complaint and the board may order the trade union to prepare another audited financial statement in a form and containing the particulars that the board considers appropriate.' In other words, if there is the slightest concern on the part of any member of a labour union, they have the right in law to go to the Ontario Labour Relations Board and not only demand a copy of the financial statements, the audited statements, but they can make an appeal to the board to

investigate any matter that they think needs investigation, and the board has the power to do so."

He argues: "The provisions of Bill 53 are redundant in this respect, the first purpose of the bill," and that "the enforcement provisions in Bill 53 are incredibly weak in comparison with the very strong enforcement provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act."

Why is it that we have this before us? That is the question he asks and the question I ask. The leaders are accountable to their membership. If they request an audited statement or a copy of financial statements, they can get it. If there is a complaint, it can be investigated by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. So the various mechanisms for board members to be satisfied about what is going on in the unions are met. That is already built into their constitution.

Why is it that we want to somehow give the impression that all this is shrouded in secrecy and that that's all right for unions, but it's not all right for us to be able to get to the private sector? Because Mr Sampson and these other fine Reform members of this party say: "That's not good for the private sector. We don't think it's right for them, because shareholders shouldn't have to be brought into this and have to disclose what they make." I think that's wrong. That's a real problem for me to accept. If they have a constitution where the members are satisfied that they have access and that they know what their own members make, why are these guys over here after these unions? Why are they doing that?

I haven't heard from them. I was waiting for Mr Gilchrist to respond to what I said. Why is it, again, that they're excluding the for-profit people? He was saying before, "Oh, it includes crown corporations." Okay, that's fine. I wasn't talking about crown corporations; I was talking about the for-profit employer sector. These are people who I think should also be brought into this net. He refuses to give an explanation of why they should not be included, and I want to hear about that.

I find section 4 objectionable not because we shouldn't know what they make and not because I don't believe the members don't have access to those salaries, but because they refuse to also deal with the for-profit sector. For me, that kind of balance is important. I just cannot accept a one-sided approach to politics which is highly ideological and I would say mean. As if they haven't done enough to hurt unions already, they are continuing to create this negative picture of unions, that somehow their salaries are shrouded in secrecy.

When Mr Gilchrist gets an opportunity to pass this bill and it gets back into the House, he can proudly say, "We finally got to the unions. You're finally going to know what these union people make," but make no statement as to whether we should know what other folks are making out there in the for-profit sector. So I object to the fact that he's going to proudly go out into his community and say: "I'm finally going after the unions. You guys are going to know what these people make."

I'll be voting against this particular section for that reason.

The Chair: Any further comment? All those in favour of section 4, as amended?

Interjection: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Danford, Gilchrist, Maves, Ross, Stewart, Young.

Nays

Marchese, Sergio.

The Chair: Section 4, as amended, is carried.

Section 5. We have three New Democrat amendments, all of which are out of order.

Mr Marchese: Again? See, the balance is tipped in favour of the Conservatives, I tell you.

The Chair: Any discussion on section 5?

Mr Marchese: Let me read that, Mr Chair. Hold on, please. Oh, yes, I've got a problem there. On subsection 5(1) — and the Tories have to help me out. They've got to speak to this. I can't do it alone.

In (2) it says: "A labour union or employees association shall promptly deliver to any person, other than the Minister of Finance, a copy of a statement of record that it is required to make available to the public under section 3 or 4 if the person requests a copy and pays the labour union or employees association the fee prescribed by the regulations...."

1720

Look at the language here. If you look at the language here, it says "shall promptly deliver." It doesn't say "shall deliver" but "shall promptly deliver." What does the word "promptly" tell you, Mr Chair? It tells you that somehow these bad union people, these labour people, when they make a request, now that they're going to be ordered by this if this thing ever goes through, are going to have to deliver it promptly. Because they cannot be trusted to deliver it, they have to deliver it promptly. "Promptly" — I don't know what it means. I get the sense that somehow, if you deliver it, you've got to respond to it pretty darn quickly, and that may be the next moment, the next hour or the same day — I'm not sure — but it's promptly. I object to that because it gives the impression that somehow the unions don't want to do that, wouldn't want to do that, and that we've got to force them into submission. That's what it says.

I think the language leaves a very negative impression. I wonder if Mr Gilchrist would remove the word "promptly" from 5, and I urge him to speak to that. If not, I'll make an amendment to that effect.

Mr Gilchrist: The only reason the word "promptly" is in there is because — and I'm sure Mr Marchese and his government, I think quite wisely, used similar language almost any time they had any direction for payment of fees or delivery of any documents.

Again I take direction from legal counsel when they helped me craft the wording in this bill. If you don't have a word like "promptly" in there, "shall deliver" could be construed to be two years from now, five years from now. There should be implicit in there the sense that this should be done on a timely basis.

It's certainly not meant to single out any one group. It's quite consistent. I think the member would find that his own government made many references in documentation, in laws such as this, to suggest that there should be a timeliness to the delivery of documents or the payment of fees.

Mr Marchese: I don't remember the word "promptly" in documentation that we might have dealt with in the past. I remember language such as "within a reasonable time frame," and all of that is always vague because you can't pin it down unless you actually pin it down to dates.

Mr Gilchrist: That's right.

Mr Marchese: I don't remember "promptly," but there is language of "reasonable time frame" or "reasonable time." That I could live with because it doesn't have the same negative connotation as "promptly."

Now, "reasonable time" probably legally could — they probably define it in their own way. I'm not sure how they do that. I think that's much more acceptable language. I don't know whether the research officer has any sense of that. Legal counsel obviously would, but they're not here. I think language that includes the wording "reasonable time frame" is reasonable language. The word "promptly," in my view, is unreasonable.

Mr Gilchrist: I guess I would just —

The Chair: Mr Sergio was the next person to speak.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm sorry, Mario. I didn't realize that. I guess my sense is, not to sound contrary, that to that union employee, to the worker on the line who has made the request, "promptly" is probably a word that he or she is quite comfortable seeing in there because of the mere fact of them making the request. Obviously they want that information and they want it on a timely basis.

Considering that the report has already been drafted by that date and that the union would be paid no differently than anyone else for the fee that would represent the cost of photocopying and mailing that out if somebody didn't want to actually go down and pick it up, then they're not out of pocket and I would think that again — and I have no reason to cast aspersions on any union. I believe that when one of their members makes a request to the parent union, they would want to react quickly to ensure that the member, who is paying monthly dues, gets that kind of value.

I must say I can't see why it makes a big difference — promptly, reasonable. As I say, the word came from legal counsel and I don't think there was any malice aforethought. It was done simply to ensure that there was some sense of timeliness in responding to a union member and anyone making a request.

Mr Sergio: I guess I wasn't too explicit perhaps before when I was asking a question of Mr Marchese but should have addressed it to Mr Gilchrist on the other side to avoid the confusion, to make it clearer perhaps. Saying "shall promptly deliver to any person," that doesn't have to be an employee or whoever. Let's say you walk to the counter and say, "I want a copy of this or a copy of that." It may not be the appropriate time or it may be an inconvenient time for some employee of that union to provide that particular document. They may say, "Can you come back in two hours?" or, "Can you come back in three hours?"

I'm not trying to be picky or technical; I'm just trying to make sense out of the situation here. That's what I was trying to say before, to clarify the intent of the request and say within a particular time or notification of time, so that we don't give any excuse — not that I particularly

agree — to the union to say, “Sorry, you’ve got to come back tomorrow,” or, “I’ve got to get it ready,” or, “I have to photocopy,” or, “The person you want, who is going to do it, is not here.”

Once you have submitted your request in writing within a particular time, they’ve got to provide you with that information. Promptly? Yes, that’s what it means, that when I request it you have to supply me that information promptly. All right? “I didn’t negate you getting that information; it was just inconvenient for me. You came at five to 12. The person who should be getting you that information isn’t here. You’ve got to come back at 2 o’clock. That person is not here now.” They’re not doing that on purpose; it’s just that they can’t provide it to you at the time that you request it.

But if you have something in writing, within 24 hours or whatever, just to make it clear, so you don’t leave any chance to create more confusion or problems for the person requesting it, I would feel more comfortable if I go in and request it from Local 185 or whoever, and don’t have to make five trips over there. I know I have sent a letter — I have a copy — and that by such-and-such a date or day or time, I’m going to pick it up, it’s going to be there. That’s what I would like to see. Perhaps Mr Gilchrist wants to comment on that. If that is inappropriate, then it’s fine. If we’re going to be voted down, that’s fine too. If you want to clarify it —

Mr Gilchrist: I would not want to tie the hands of the union with an artificial number of hours. I am sympathetic. The person may be on vacation; it may be a holiday week. I don’t think there’s anybody in this room or outside this room who would interpret “promptly” in the context that this is being untoward to turn around a request even within the same week or two weeks. But it certainly does not mean months and months, and that’s all that I intended by “promptly.”

Mr Sergio: I don’t know if Mr Fenson is the one to answer this. What does “promptly” or “within a reasonable period of time” mean?

Mr Fenson: It used to be one had words like “promptly” — and an even more urgent one was “forthwith” — but it’s become common in the last generation to have legislation which also talks about “the third business day after” or some specification in terms of week or month, so that’s possible. But “promptly” is not the most urgent available word; “forthwith” is a stronger demand on speed.

1730

Mr Sergio: I don’t use legal language here. I’m reading from this, where it says, “A labour union, employees association or public sector for-profit employer shall promptly deliver to any person other than” —

The Chair: What are you reading from? We’re not dealing with an amendment; we’re dealing with section 5. There are no amendments to section 5.

Mr Sergio: I keep referring back and forth.

The Chair: We’re strictly dealing with section 5; actually subsection 5(2).

Mr Sergio: Yes, that’s what I was reading from, subsection 5(2).

The Chair: The amendment is out of order.

Mr Sergio: Okay. I didn’t hear that.

Mr Marchese: Let me tell you the problem I have. The researcher, Mr Fenson, used a few other words to talk about other possibilities. “Forthwith” would be even more evil, I would argue. “The third business day” or whatever, all of that is fine, but there is no urgency to this. It’s not as if it’s a matter of life and death, where you have to go get your birth certificate or your driver’s licence, something you need that is urgent, something you require, otherwise it’s a problem. There’s no urgency to this particular matter whatsoever.

I’ll add this: There has never been a complaint that we’re aware of where a union member requested information about salary disclosure and didn’t get it. I’m not sure whether there was a request — I don’t know — and, if there was a request, whether there was ever a problem in getting that information. That’s never been an issue. The way it’s presented, it makes it appear like it is an issue.

This particular wording isn’t here for union members; this is for the public. I find that even more objectionable. He wants to get to that taxpayer of his in his riding and say: “Look what I’ve done for you. I’m now going to make sure that if you ask the union to give you that salary disclosure, you’re going to get it promptly.” That’s what he’s getting at, because “any person” doesn’t say “any union person.” “Any person” says “any person of the general public,” right? That’s who he’s speaking to. He wants to satisfy the general public person who wants to come and make that request. You’re going to get it promptly.

I don’t see what the urgency of that is, nor do I see that there has ever been a problem that has been identified in relation to this particular matter. That’s why I find the word objectionable. Mr Gilchrist doesn’t find it objectionable, but I find it objectionable. He doesn’t see why it’s a problem. I see it as a problem. I see “promptly” as a negative word because it suggests that it’s been a problem before. If he’s not willing to entertain that, I’m going to move that the word “promptly” be deleted from that section.

The Chair: You’re putting forward an amendment?

Mr Marchese: I had better put an amendment, because he doesn’t appear to be willing to either delete or change it.

I move that “promptly” be deleted from subsection 5(2).

The Chair: I guess we’ve discussed the issue enough.

Mr Marchese: I want a recorded vote.

Ayes

Marchese, Sergio.

Nays

Danford, Gilchrist, Maves, Ross, Stewart, Young.

The Chair: Mr Marchese’s motion is lost.

Mr Marchese: I have another amendment proposal. I’d like to propose that “promptly” be replaced by the words “within a reasonable time.”

Mr Stewart: Would Mr Marchese explain to me the definition of “reasonable,” please.

Mr Marchese: I’ve heard it said on many an occasion in various committees that “reasonable” has some legal resonance or understanding.

Mr Stewart: I didn't ask that.

Mr Gilchrist: What's your interpretation?

Mr Marchese: "Reasonable time" is flexible time. It could mean one day, it could mean two days, it could mean a week, it could even be two weeks or longer.

Mr Gilchrist: So it's sort of like "promptly," which is undefined, as I read into the record already, flexible in consideration of the circumstances.

Mr Marchese: I beg your pardon, no, Mr Gilchrist. You're absolutely wrong. "Promptly" doesn't include any flexibility whatsoever. You may have said for the record, for yourself, that "promptly" includes the possibility that somebody might be sick. This doesn't allow for that. "Promptly" doesn't say, "Oh, by the way, if you're sick it's okay." "Promptly" says, "Right now."

Mr Gilchrist: How does "reasonable time" —

Mr Marchese: "Reasonable time," as you know, is a very flexible term that allows for some problem to happen so that you could not deliver it promptly, for the following reasons. Then you could give reasons as to why you might not have been able to deliver it promptly. But "promptly" doesn't take into account the fact that you might have been sick, that a whole department might have had a fire over there and can't deliver it to you, or that there was a problem.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Chair, if Mr Marchese is indicating that this is his only qualification and will allow us to proceed on the vote for the rest of the section —

The Chair: Mr Stewart, are you satisfied with the answer you got?

Mr Stewart: No, I'm not, Mr Chair.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, if you're finished with the answer —

Mr Marchese: Does he have a problem with what I said? I want to hear him. Why isn't he happy? Why is he unhappy with what I said?

Mr Stewart: I asked for his interpretation of "reasonable." "Reasonable" could mean one year as well, or two years or five years.

Mr Marchese: I find that unreasonable.

Mr Stewart: If you want me to support your amendment, you should be able to give me an interpretation of what "reasonable" means.

Mr Marchese: I did. I didn't say one year; you did.

Mr Stewart: No, in your mind you did.

The Chair: With all due respect, there's no place to include that in the wording.

Mr Stewart: I was trying to promptly get the amendment off this, and we could get out of here and get this thing promptly passed.

Mr Marchese: Do you see what I mean?

Mr Gilchrist: If I could speak to Mr Marchese, if he would be prepared to further refine it to say "shall within 10 business days," I would be prepared to support that amendment.

The Chair: Okay. First of all, we have an amendment on the floor by Mr Marchese that we delete the word "promptly" and substitute the words "in a reasonable time." I think we've discussed it enough.

All in favour of that particular change?

Mr Marchese: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Marchese, Sergio.

Nays

Danford, Gilchrist, Maves, Ross, Stewart, Young.

The Chair: That amendment is defeated.

Shall section 5 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 5 is carried.

Section 6. Mr Marchese has three amendments to section 6, which again, unfortunately, Mr Marchese, are all out of order for the reasons given before.

Mr Marchese: I can't believe it.

The Chair: Is there any comment on section 6? Mr Marchese.

Interjection: Do it promptly.

Mr Marchese: I will do it promptly.

Subsection 6(1) reads as follows, for the record:

"6(1) A person who is a member of a labour union or employees association and who feels that the labour union or employees association has not made available to the public a statement or record as required by section 3, 4 or 5 or that a statement or record that it has made available to the public under this act contains false or incomplete information may file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board."

I was reading what Mr Ross McClellan was saying for the record. He said, "Where a member of a trade union complains that an audited financial statement is inadequate, the board" — that is, the Ontario Labour Relations Board — 'may inquire into the complaint and the board may order the trade union to prepare another audited financial statement in a form and containing the particulars that the board considers appropriate.'"

It's already contained in their constitution, as I read earlier on. Isn't this section redundant, Mr Gilchrist?

1740

Mr Gilchrist: No. It needs to be referred to in this bill in order to tie it back. You're absolutely right, the union members currently have a right under the union constitution in some cases. In Mr McClellan's union's case, I accept that; not in all unions' cases. That was also part of the evidence we had heard.

Clearly, it should be the right of all union members to be able to have some independent arbiter — not you, not me, not a politician, but the Ontario Labour Relations Board — be able to rule on whether the information was fairly disclosed. This does nothing more in this bill, because it has to. Again, as a novice at this, legal counsel, when I did my first draft, said that you had to have some reference to the enforcement or there's no point having a statute. You can't proscribe something without saying who the person is who will be doing the oversight. So it was the suggestion to simply refer back to the same act that you've been referring to in the submission by Mr McClellan. We're singing from the same song sheet, only this makes sure every union member in the province has that right of appeal.

Mr Marchese: So let me ask — I don't know if Mr Fenson knows — do people not have access to the

Ontario Labour Relations Board now on any complaint that they might have with respect to this?

Mr Fenson: I'd have to look at that statute to see if it automatically applies to all unions, the terms under which the accounts of the union are to be made available to the members. I just can't answer; I don't have the statute in front of me, but I can find that out.

The Chair: Any further discussion on section 6? Shall section 6 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 6 is carried.

Section 7: Mr Marchese has three amendments to section 7. Again, they are out of order. Any discussion on section 7? Mr Marchese?

Mr Marchese: No, Mr Chair. I just needed to look at it. Sorry.

Mr Gilchrist: If I can help Mr Marchese refresh his memory, this simply says — and I'd be the first to agree with his earlier submission — there may be no union that gets a direct grant, the same way that, say, the ROM does. This only says in this section that if there is a grant that was due and there's been a failure to file the legally required notice, the grant would be held up until the filing was received.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, does that —

Mr Marchese: Yes. On section 7 the same argument applies to all of this, that I would have loved to have seen this government do the right thing and that is include the for-profit sector as well, as we were trying to do with all of our amendments. I think it's wrong to do that. I'll be opposing it.

The Chair: Any further discussion on section 7? Shall section 7 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 7 is carried.

Section 8: Mr Marchese again has three amendments which are out of order. Any discussion on section 8? Seeing none, shall section 8 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 8 is carried.

Mr Marchese: Sorry — you were on section 7 —

Mr Sergio: Section 7 is done.

Mr Marchese: I want to speak to section 8.

The Chair: Section 8 is done now, Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: No, no. I'm sorry. I want to speak to section 8.

The Chair: I'm sorry. You voted against it. I called the motion on section 8. I said, "Seeing no comment on section 8...all those in favour...all those opposed?" So section 8 is carried.

Mr Marchese: Mr Chair, just allow me the courtesy to speak to one of these issues.

The Chair: Section 8 has been carried, Mr Marchese. I allowed it once before for you. I gave you even more time this time. You did not address any comments to it, so section 8 is carried.

Mr Marchese: If you do that, then I'll slow the whole process down by reading every section so I will not miss anything.

Mr Young: You should have read it before you came here.

Mr Marchese: I appreciate that Mr Young has read the whole thing and he understands it, but some of us would prefer to have that time to reflect on these things as we go along. So if you do that, I'm going to read every section so I won't miss a thing.

The Chair: Do we have all-party consent to go back to section 8?

Mr Gilchrist: I was prepared to indicate that if Mr Marchese is going to be allowing us to finish the last couple of minor sections before the close, I would have no problem giving unanimous consent to allowing him to make a brief comment on section 8 into the record.

The Chair: Mr Marchese?

Mr Marchese: No.

The Chair: So we do not have unanimous consent to reopen section 8?

Mr Marchese: He wants me to finish this whole thing before the time is up is what I think I heard him say.

The Chair: That's what he said.

Mr Marchese: No.

Mr Sergio: Not in exactly the same words, but that's what he meant, yes.

The Chair: So I do not see unanimous consent to reopen section 8.

Section 9: Any comments on section 9?

Mr Marchese: "The provisions of this act prevail over any other act, any regulation made under any other act or any agreement unless another act specifically mentions those provisions and provides otherwise."

Again, I object to what's here. It's an overriding type of clause on an issue that I don't believe should have that kind of attention, and when this language as is written here says that it shall prevail over any other act, to me, that's a problem. I don't believe it's of that kind of importance to me or to the general public that this particular provision should be here, and I don't know what it overrides. It may override many other acts, very likely, but I don't support this clause.

Mr Sergio: It seems to me that this is a clause that supersedes any other act, "may prevail over any other act." Is this a superseding clause? Can you perhaps, your staff or Mr Gilchrist, give us any idea of any other act this one here supersedes?

Mr Gilchrist: Again, Mr Sergio, in sitting down with legal counsel, I was told that this is pretty much a standard clause that you would put in a bill like this. The only other acts that might apply would be acts such as the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act if it was ever amended to include labour unions as well, for example, and because it's dated later, I'm told it would transcend this one. But in all the research that was done, legal counsel advised me that there is no conflict caused by this one right here, but it's the sort of boilerplate that lawyers put in to —

Mr Sergio: I'll accept that, but the fact is that this is something very important we are doing here, and I'm surprised that we can't have the legal counsel here to answer some of our questions. It will go through, I have no doubts about that, but I will have some doubts in my mind that I cannot be satisfied from a legal point of view, if you will, from the very same people who have written this clause here. The way I read it, this particular section 9 has the power to supersede other acts. I'm asking the question, what other acts? In what other cases? Give me some examples. I would like to have that explanation for my own satisfaction from our own legal people here.

I won't doubt what Mr Gilchrist is saying, that the legal staff says it doesn't mean very much. To me, the way I read it, it means an awful lot, because this now supersedes many other acts.

Mr Gilchrist: No. Again, the other act would have to be silent on an issue, as you see in the second half of this clause, "unless another act specifically mentions those provisions." For example, if we were talking about —

Mr Sergio: That's my point. What other acts?

Mr Gilchrist: But I'm saying any act that specifically mentions a provision would not be superseded, so it's only an act that's silent. For example, there is no bill that requires labour unions to disclose salaries, so you would agree with me that therefore this is a new provision that would not affect another bill. If, at some point in the future, another statute included a similar reference, they would have to make reference in their bill to this one to determine who ranks first.

1750

Mr Sergio: I will accept that, but my difficulty here is that when we say "any other act or any agreement unless another act specifically mentions those provisions," I would have difficulties myself to find another act that very specifically — I don't want to hold this up, Mr Chairman, but I would find difficulties to find another act that specifically has those provisions where it says, "Section 9 does not supersede this particular act over here, because there is a very specific particular provision in here." I myself would have difficulties, but if the solicitor would be here and say yes and would give us some examples for the benefit of the members here — it is that portion that leaves me a little bit unclear. I don't know if I make any —

Interjections.

Mr Sergio: I wouldn't get hung up on that.

The Chair: Any further comment on section 9? Shall section 9 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, I would hope that at other times when we are dealing with important documents like this one here we would have on hand our staff to answer some questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Sergio.

Section 10: Mr Gilchrist has an amendment to number 10.

Mr Gilchrist: I move that clause 10(1)(a) of the bill be struck out. That is amendment 35A in your compendium.

Very briefly, we were listening when the depositions were made and, forgive me, I can't off the top of my head remember which one of the union spokespersons who came before us had some difficulty with that, and in reflecting it probably is not appropriate to discriminate between different unions or employees' associations, and it probably is not appropriate to allow that discretionary power under the regulations. So the motion will be withdrawing clause 10(1)(a).

The Chair: Any questions, Mr Marchese, on that?

Mr Marchese: No, in fact, that would have been one of my questions on that particular issue: "exempting a labour union or employees association from a provision of this act." I wanted to know what that meant, and he's explained, and I agree with him.

The Chair: All in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment carries.

Further amendments: Mr Marchese has one, two, up to number 41. Mr Marchese, those amendments are out of order for the same reason as given before. Mr Marchese, do you have some comments on section 10?

Mr Marchese: Yes. I want some clarification from Mr Gilchrist on section 10 on a lot of areas. "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make any regulations the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out the intent and purpose of this act, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing..." Two problems: one, "may make any regulations," and two, it includes what is here but is not limited to what is here. What is that? What could it possibly include? Because the language worries me.

Mr Gilchrist: I have a very simple answer, Mr Marchese. When you look through the different sections, and I certainly don't wish to sit here and sound like any kind of expert in bill drafting, because I'm the furthest thing from it, that's a standard preamble in bills that says nothing more than the Lieutenant Governor in Council will have the ability to ensure that the words we are voting on today are successfully translated into workable, clear, concise and effective regulations. As you go down the list, for example, (b), that is really nothing more than ensuring that they meet generally accepted accounting principles. We've all heard that phrase around here. The regulation probably would be as concise as just that.

As you go down through the different headings, you'll also find that this is in every respect identical to Bill 26. Mr Marchese, I can give you an absolute assurance that in no respect did I ask labour unions or employees associations to be treated to a different standard than what was asked for in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. I give you that absolute undertaking. The words you see here are completely consistent with what we're asking people at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Science Centre and hospitals and universities and the whole compendium I showed you earlier today in clause-by-clause. This applies exactly the same standards. In fact, the words under this section of regulation are taken right from how those other groups are treated. I can give you the absolute assurance that nothing has been done that would single out or in any way put a different standard to labour unions or to employee associations.

Mr Marchese: So the language, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, only refers to the various items that are listed here from (a) to (i), or does it possibly include other things?

Mr Gilchrist: The only time it includes something else, and forgive my inability to craft an answer in a legal phrase — let's say, for the sake of argument, I had left out clause (b) in the list, which I think we would accept is a reasonable thing. Of course the unions will want to know what format to send a report in, and you're going to tell them generally accepted accounting principles where you'll have a balance sheet and an income statement. If I had left it out, that would be an important thing where someone looking at the actual regulations would have to say, "Holy mackerel, Gilchrist left this out and we've got to put in something even though it's not

listed there.” But if your question is, can they go beyond the scope of the issues we’ve talked about here today, no; the regulations cannot expand the other sections and requirements we’ve asked of the unions. In no respect can they be extended beyond that.

Mr Marchese: Indeed. It says, “(b) prescribing standards that a labour union or employees association shall observe in preparing the audited statements on its financial affairs mentioned in subsection 3(1).” It may not be as onerous as anything else we do. What (b) speaks to, and correct me if I’m wrong, is that labour unions might have different standards for the way they prepare audited statements and this says they will prescribe a standard they would like the union to prepare it in.

Mr Gilchrist: On that matter, for example, no. There is in Ontario only one standard for an audited statement. That’s it. Any accountant, any auditor will tell you they’ve got a huge 600-page handbook that tells them how they do their job. I anticipate that the regulation would say nothing more than, “The unions or employees associations shall prepare the audited statements in conformity with the Ontario standard of audits.”

Mr Marchese: Would you need (b) then? I thought if it was a standard thing that they all practise, why do you need this?

Mr Gilchrist: You need that. Legal counsel told me at some point you’re going to have to go to groups and say: “Here’s the quick and dirty little checklist. Your statement must be in generally accepted accounting principles. It must be done according to the audit standard that’s acceptable to the group of auditors in Ontario.” All those things are set out already in the bylaws of the auditors, for example, in this case.

Mr Marchese: What does clause (d) mean? It says, “providing that an amount other than \$100,000 applies for the purposes of section 1, subsections 4(1) and (3) clause (c) of this subsection.”

Mr Gilchrist: If at some point in the future this committee or others were to hear a bill that amends this one the regulation would have to be amended as well. I can give you my personal assurance that I will not come forward with an amendment to change it from \$100,000. That says nothing more than if the other section earlier in the act is to change, the regulations obviously would have to change as well. You can’t have the regulations asking for \$100,000 if the bill gets changed to \$200,000.

Mr Marchese: I see. Okay. “Providing that specified payments that a labour union or employees association makes to or in respect of an employee be included in or excluded from the definition of ‘salary’ or ‘benefit’ for the purpose of this act and prescribing” them — what does that mean?

Mr Gilchrist: Again, if the federal government were to say tomorrow that your car allowance is no longer a deemed benefit, the regulation would have within it the ability to conform to the federal Income Tax Act. If the federal government doesn’t call it a benefit, we won’t call it a benefit.

1800

Mr Marchese: I see. And (f)?

Mr Gilchrist: If I were to give you a bonus plan but merely indicated that you’ve earned a bonus of \$5,000

and didn’t pay it to you, I don’t think it would be fair to deem that the employee earned the \$5,000. This says we would have the ability to say — it’s totally consistent with the federal Income Tax Act — only the money you actually got would be judged for the purpose of the \$100,000 threshold.

Mr Marchese: You were advised that you should include this language, in other words.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes, by our legal counsel. I would be misleading you if I suggested that they didn’t supply 99% of the words in that section.

Mr Marchese: I understand; and (g) “prescribing methods in addition to or in place of those mentioned in this act”?

Mr Gilchrist: For example, we just changed the Employment Standards Act. One of the provisions in it said that all payroll records had to be in writing. Just as you and I are treated, all our payroll records are electronic. Technically speaking, it would have been illegal for you and me to get paid electronically. It should be done by cheque. This just says if at some point in the future there’s a new technology and every one of us walks around with an e-mail access somehow glued to us, we’d have the ability to say that’s an acceptable way to send out the information.

Mr Marchese: This is the same thing, “by a particular method.”

Mr Gilchrist: Yes.

Mr Marchese: I was just turning the page and it says, “to disclose information by a particular method.” I think you’ve answered that.

In (h) “prescribing the fee that may be charged under subsection 5(2) for furnishing a copy of a record or statement.”

Mr Gilchrist: Unions would be allowed to set a reasonable fee for a photocopy, and if you asked them to mail it, they’d be allowed to add a mailing charge as well.

Mr Marchese: So (h) simply provides for the union to recover some of these costs?

Mr Gilchrist: Absolutely. They can have full cost recovery.

Mr Marchese: In (i), “defining ‘fund’...and ‘promptly’.”

Mr Gilchrist: Remember we spoke earlier that if there was a grant of some kind being given to a union, “grant” and “funding” would be defined. I believe that’s already done under the Interpretation Act.

Mr Marchese: And the word “promptly”?

Mr Gilchrist: We would have to come up with a reasonable time period specified in there.

Mr Marchese: So you’re going to have to define this at some point. Is that what (i) means?

Mr Gilchrist: They would have the ability to define that. I think representations made, including the ones you’ve made here today, would in large measure shape that conclusion.

Mr Marchese: So (i) permits for “promptly” to be defined at some point.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes.

Mr Marchese: Did they tell you what that would look like, perhaps?

Mr Gilchrist: No.

Mr Marchese: You didn't necessarily ask.

Mr Gilchrist: I don't mean to be facetious at all. When I saw that word, it meant to me something consistent with a reasonable time period. I would be quite prepared to give you a personal undertaking that if at the conclusion of all this we can work together in the drafting of that regulation, I would be prepared to make that overture.

The Chair: Any further discussion on section 10?

Mr Marchese: Is "scope" part of that? I'm sorry, that's 10(2), right?

Mr Gilchrist: Yes.

Mr Marchese: Could you speak to that again?

Mr Gilchrist: Very briefly. I'm told that is a standard boilerplate. Because there are different types of unions and associations there may be requirements, just off the top of my head, in terms of how they disseminate information to their members. We may all agree that the larger unions would have an easier time, perhaps, embracing electronic transmission of information, but it would be unfair to ask a smaller union local to invest in that same technology. I think it merely says there would be the ability to be flexible, and maybe even the timing, that a small union local might have extra consideration in terms of what "reasonable" or "promptly" is in getting something out. I hope you would agree with us that the flexibility would be a positive thing.

Mr Marchese: Do you not think all this is a great big deal for something that — I'm not sure. I think it is a big deal because disclosure is a big deal, but maybe I'll speak

to the title because that's where I'll make my other point and get you to speak to it afterwards. I have nothing else on that matter.

The Chair: Any more comments on section 10? Shall section 10, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 10, as amended, is carried.

Shall section 11 carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 11 carries.

Shall section 12 carry? All those in favour?

Mr Marchese: I have a comment, sir. This is where I want to make my general comments with respect to —

The Chair: Okay. First of all, I should tell you that your amendment is out of order.

Mr Marchese: What page was that?

The Chair: Page 42.

Mr Marchese: Why is it out of order?

The Chair: For the same reason as the previous ones.

Mr Marchese: Right, and that's why I want to speak to that. This government could have redeemed itself if they had done what we proposed they do.

Mr Sergio: On a point of order, Mr Chair: Are we adjourning at six o'clock, or what's the story here?

The Chair: That clock is fast. I don't believe the bells have gone on, have they?

Mr Sergio: No, there's a late show.

The Chair: It is past six o'clock. We need all-party approval to continue past six o'clock. Do we have unanimous consent? No? The committee is adjourned until next Thursday.

The committee adjourned at 1807.

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**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain PC) for Mr Flaherty

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold ND)

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Avrum Fenson, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Michael Wood, legislative counsel



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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 7 November 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 7 novembre 1996

**Standing committee on
general government**

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 1996 réduisant le nombre
de députés



Chair: Jack Carroll
Clerk: Lynn Mellor

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 7 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO
COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 7 novembre 1996

The committee met at 1003 in committee room 1.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996
LOI DE 1996
RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning. Welcome to public hearings on Bill 81. A couple of housekeeping things first of all: You have had placed in front of you the minutes of the subcommittee meeting where we outlined how the business of this committee would be conducted during these hearings. We need a motion to adopt it, please.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): So moved.

The Chair: Any questions on the subcommittee report? All those in favour of adoption? Opposed? The subcommittee report has been adopted.

As you know, we're on a bit of a tight time schedule here. Our scheduling for Ottawa and London will continue as long as spots are available. So we're still accommodating the people who are calling in as long as spots are available. If we're going to be in a place, we may as well be busy.

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): Mr Chair, we were supposed to get a list of witnesses for Ottawa and London. Is this list ready?

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Lynn Mellor): They're only being finalized 24 hours prior to the meeting, so I won't have Ottawa's until at least 5 o'clock tonight and I won't have London's finalized for release until Friday, because of the way it's set up in the subcommittee.

Mr Grandmaître: Can you provide us with — I know it's not final — how many phone calls or letters, how many requests you have received?

Clerk of the Committee: If it's the wish of the committee, I can give you what I've got. Everyone who has communicated with the committee to date has had a call go out to them. If it's the wish of the committee, I'll provide that for you when we come back this afternoon.

The Chair: Is that fine, Mr Grandmaître?

Mr Grandmaître: Yes.

The Chair: Since we are on a relatively tight time schedule, we will continue to fill in spots as they are available. I have had at least one written request, and there have been a couple of other verbal requests, to allow members of the Legislature to appear before the committee. It's an unusual request. It's something we should talk about. We have an opening before lunch today, so we'll defer that particular issue until then.

Mr Grandmaître: Until when?

The Chair: We have an opening at 11:40, so we'll discuss that issue before we break for lunch.

DAVID AUSTIN

The Chair: Our first presenter is David Austin. Good morning and welcome to our committee. You have 20 minutes to use as you see fit. Any time you allow for questions will be shared among the three caucuses and will begin with the Liberals. The floor is yours.

Mr David Austin: Good morning. I'm here as an individual citizen. However, I will expand that a little to say that I have done my own review of my own constituents. That means the folks on the golf course, the people I know in business and my general friends and neighbours. The words I have here represent a netting down of their feelings about this proposal, Bill 81.

Just a word of personal background so that you understand a little where I'm coming from: I was born in the early 1930s and have childhood recollections of a very tight monetary situation within my household and the place I was born, England itself. I obviously came through the war years, and the war years taught me another lesson, which was that food is not a right, food is something you are lucky to get in some cases, some people. I think that's very obvious in Africa today. Just to give you an idea, I have some rather hard lessons that my thoughts and views may express. You may see those buried in it.

I've been 30 years in industry. I was then asked if I would like to retire, one of those early people at the end of that revolution when all was free and everybody could afford everything; again, a little impact on my thought process. A working sort of person, an air frame technician, I worked on the Argus aircraft at Canadair, through computer software specialist with International Business Machines and 15 years of management in that company.

What all that has led me to is what I feel is a deep-seated belief that you cannot spend what you don't have and that you have to do a job well. If you do a job, if you propose to take on a job, that job should be done to the best possible ability, but only within the resources you have. That seems to be the real nut of the whole thing.

If you put the two together, my entire experience in business and industry as a working person is that there are only so many resources. Those resources must be placed on the highest-priority needs, and my opinion is that in this world, in the political world, those are health and education. I have two children, I have grandchildren, and it's imperative to me that health and education, particularly education, are kept in the best order possible, using as many resources as can be done.

1010

When you use those resources, you must use them in the most efficient way, and that leads me, of course, into Bill 81. I've looked a little at the back history. I'm aware that the number of members in the House has gone from 90 in 1957 to 130 in 1987, with obviously a more or less equivalent increase in the number of residents within Ontario. However, the way that was done, if I have a slight perception, is that the increase in members was done to lower the number of constituents in the fast-growing areas within Ontario; not an unreasonable thing to do, on the surface. We've reached the point now where expenditure limits the ability to do that.

There is also a philosophical problem, and I'll talk to the philosophical one first. I believe very strongly that each citizen or voter should have an equal-value vote. That, to me, is absolutely basic to democracy; within reason, as far as it can be driven. The second one, of course, is that any government must avoid unnecessary expenditures and must streamline as much as possible so that the resources can be put where they give the most leverage to the population. Let me address each of those.

The equal-value vote, as I call it: Today, if I understand correctly, my vote is worth about 25% of a vote in the smallest riding in Ontario. I come from a constituency that is quite large, and I'm aware of the smallest riding. That does two things. It's a real problem in that it disfranchises me to some degree. My vote, my opinions and my background are not reflected in my government as they could be, albeit in a minor way.

The other one is the perceived problem, and the perceived problem is probably the biggest part because a large part of politics is perception. The perception is one of being cheated. The perception is that if a government gets in that I don't like, I have been robbed of my chance to prevent that from happening. No partisan message here at all; it's just a fact that this perception can be out there in all people, and it's something that needs to be addressed. In my discussions with my associates that came out as possibly one of the largest problems.

For purposes of discussion on what could be done about this, let me break Ontario down into urban, rural and rural north constituencies. In the urban constituencies, if you reduce the number of members from 130 to 103, the impact on the voters in the urban areas is relatively minor. The additional workload to the MPPs, or to the riding associations which have to try to get those MPPs into office, is not that much tougher. It is a few more streets to walk, a few more houses to call on, but there isn't really a problem.

In the rural ridings, it begins to show some concern because of the growth in the area, the distances you have to travel. Obviously, I will go on from that to the north-

ern ridings, which can become quite large. I'm aware of the size those ridings will move to; I've studied the maps.

One of the things I did in business was to organize a support organization within the business community in which I worked, International Business Machines, computer hardware and software, which would work to support all of Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Australia and Japan. It was not an easy task. It took some significant effort and some very key people with unusual skills to put together something that would do that. That was done in a process which would, through organization and technology, allow communication and problem-solving — all those sorts of things I believe an MPP has to do. He has to be reachable by his community, by his constituents. He has to solve those problems and get resolutions in place.

If we look at that organization and technology, I've talked to some of the MPPs and some of the riding offices. Multiple riding offices, suboffices and volunteers to run those suboffices are obvious ones being done today. Clearly they will have to be enlarged for those large ridings up in the north.

Use of call centres: I have a degree of closeness to those in that my daughter works for a call centre that operates for many businesses. I have discussed this with her and she agrees with me that a small segment of a call centre could be bought by an MPP or by a riding association, and that call centre would provide the appropriate ability to communicate between the MPP and his constituents.

Other thoughts come to mind. Modified hours of sitting of the House: Clearly the folks who have to work the ridings in the north need a little longer time than the folks who live in Toronto. Sit longer in the evenings Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, take Thursday afternoon off, and you're on your way back to your riding — those sorts of things.

Special cost allowances must be built into the system without the sometimes unfortunate appearance that MPPs are getting something for nothing. We have to support those MPPs who are carrying these larger ridings.

Then you get into the cellular phones, the radio phones, e-mail and the Internet. The e-mail/Internet area is exploding and I'm convinced that it can be used.

The other point I wanted to talk about was the actual avoidance of money, of cost. Let's address that very quickly. Ontario will no longer need to run an office which has to coordinate and work on and assess riding sizes. The reduction of 27 MPPs and staff; the real estate requirements for those people; operational costs of heat, light, phone and copiers; shared voters' lists — I've looked at the amount that the government has suggested it might save per year: \$11 million, \$400,000 per MPP. I think they're way too low, personally. As a businessperson, I can see many costs behind each MPP that would explode it much higher than that.

If we look at that \$11 million — just accept that — that is 2,200 Ontario taxpayers, average-type taxpayers, \$5,000 a year, who could use their money somewhere else. I'd like to look at it in that way. I see the folks in this room as people who are the medium between myself as a taxpayer and the programs that are necessary out there to keep Ontario healthy and growing.

The summary comes down to, if you like, common sense. Voters and taxpayers will understand this change; there's no question. Everyone I've talked to has said yes, it's the right thing to do. It will give more equitable representation, it will give a significant deficit reduction — doing the same job for less — and it will clearly represent less debt for my children and my grandchildren. None of the people I discussed this with, or myself, can see any real downside risk to this change at all.

1020

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you, Mr Austin, for being with us this morning. I agree with you that we have to do the same job with fewer resources. If I understood your presentation, you're saying, "Use the technology that's available to MPPs to serve your constituents."

We don't know what the government intends to do. I realize that there will be some savings. We don't know the actual dollars, because we haven't gone into the issue in depth. What's happening in Ontario is that we are going through some serious changes; you mentioned education, health and many others. I agree that those changes are necessary, but at the same time MPPs should be given the tools to represent their people adequately when they're faced with these major changes. I still believe our constituents should be part of the decision-making process.

What we have before us today, especially in northern Ontario, is that many of our MPPs will not be able to serve their constituents adequately for the simple reason that you cannot travel 350 kilometres one way and 350 kilometres the other way to cover your entire riding.

We all believe redistribution is necessary. We don't agree we should be using the federal model. It should be a made-in-Ontario model that would represent our constituents and constituencies.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thank you for your presentation. I have a couple of questions. You're saying, because you have two children of your own, that health and education are very important for our future. We're talking about \$11 million in savings. During the election campaign Mike Harris was saying that referendum was the way to go, that we should have referendums on major issues. We haven't seen any yet. But if you do one referendum a year, you're talking about \$23 million to \$24 million, compared to \$11 million in savings for having fewer politicians.

The area I represent has four different languages, a number of different cultures and is huge — before this bill came forward it was bigger than a lot of countries — to be represented by one person. Now another 50,000 in population is to be added on to that particular riding. Do you think this is fair for a local member of Parliament? On one hand, you're going to save \$11 million. On the other hand, just one referendum is going to be \$23 million or more.

Mr Austin: I don't think I can speak to the referendum situation. That should only be used in very select situations. You people were elected to do the job you said you were going to do. We have to leave you with that responsibility.

But let me address the distances, which I may be able to help both of you with. Obviously, when I started

developing this huge system that was needed across continents, there were breakthroughs that had to be made in a technological way. Money had to be spent to accomplish it. I personally feel that some fair portion of the first year's savings in this case would have to be plowed back in to allow each of you MPPs to represent your ridings in a fair way that gives those constituents the ability to get to you.

Mr Gilchrist: I'd like to thank you for a very thorough presentation. Indeed, we have gone through many bills where there are nothing but groups that come before us, and I'd like to applaud you coming as an individual. Certainly you appear to have done your homework in all of this.

I'd just like to clarify for the purposes of the sort of summarization we do with the groups that come forward, that your position or your basic premise is that, given our limited resources, money should go where it is most needed. Would I be fair in saying that you believe it's more important that \$11 million goes to health or education than to MPPs' salaries?

Mr Austin: No question, absolutely.

Mr Gilchrist: I guess the second point is the merit of representation by population. You used the statistic of 25% of the value. Actually, I should bring to your attention that right now there is a disparity of as much as 400% between the smallest riding and the largest riding in terms of population, and while members opposite like to tell us about the geography, on the flip side we have ridings today, under the terribly unfair distribution of population we've inherited, that have a greater population than some provinces. There are ridings that have more people than Prince Edward Island, which has 27 sitting MPPs, or MLAs as they call them, to represent them. I hardly think that's fair. Do you believe it's fair to the people in ridings like Markham and York Centre that they have an MPP who has to do literally five times the work of some of the northern members?

Mr Austin: No, clearly not. That is also totally unrepresentative.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Austin. We appreciate your input this morning.

Mr Austin: Thank you for your time.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: Our next presenter is Ken Kelly, vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Good morning, Mr Kelly. Welcome to our committee. You will have 20 minutes. Should you leave any time for questions at the end, they would begin with the third party, the New Democrats. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Ken Kelly: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. I would like to clarify: Is that 20 minutes plus questions or 20 minutes including questions?

The Chair: It's 20 minutes including questions.

Mr Kelly: Then, if I might get down to business, I'm going to ask that we enter on the record the presentation we've had handed out to you. That will absolve us from the need to read it. If I could make a few comments, then we can get right to some questions, if that's acceptable.

The Chair: Yes, sir. The members of the committee will be sure to read your presentation.

Mr Kelly: As many of you know, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture represents some 40,000 farmers and farm families across Ontario. Of course, by definition, those are people from agricultural and rural areas. You've heard a number of times from our organization and many other organizations over the years about the value of the industry of agriculture economically and in creating wealth and jobs in this province. We have a substantial interest not only in this province, but in the way this province operates and the access that we have to government and our ability to work with government to provide a climate to continue to stimulate our economy and then to provide a tax base we can all benefit from.

It would appear from the information we have at this time that the percentage of rural seats is going to drop from about 25% to 18%, and it would seem then that agriculture's voice and rural Ontario's voice is going to be somewhat diminished and somewhat muted if we go ahead with the redistribution in the way we're talking about.

Historically, we have had a model of distribution in this province that's based on representation by population, but it has been modified for distance, for convenience and the ability to communicate, not only for the elected people but for the people of the constituency.

I would note here as an aside that we're looking at a rather interesting contradiction: We have a government that continues to talk about supporting the concept of rural development while it moves to downsize or remove the representation of rural Ontario. Quite frankly, we wonder how that works, how that could be consistent. If we're looking at agriculture to be one of the engines that drive the economy in this province, we need the representation and the access to build the climate to allow that to continue happen. So we question.

1030

We're concerned, of course, that if we start to redistribute ridings we may well diminish the capacity of rural MPPs to move rural and agricultural issues to the forefront in the minds of government officials. One of the best ways historically that we've had to ensure that agricultural and rural programs and issues are dealt with when they need to be dealt with and in a way they need to be dealt with is to work with and through the local politicians, the local MPPs, so that they can carry our message back to Queen's Park, back to the people who make the decisions.

People's access to government is one of the issues we're dealing with here. We question whether it's the right way to go when we take a look at government cutbacks, take a look at the big picture and see, for instance, notwithstanding the "No cuts to agriculture promise," continued attention to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs that appears to want to reduce and minimize the number of staff, the number of programs, the ability for information dissemination and transmittal in rural Ontario and agricultural Ontario, at the same time removing the political representation.

No one has fully quantified the cost savings of this redistribution at this point. I would suggest, from my personal point of view, that in the total scheme of things it's probably rather a paltry sum. Politicians are and have

been and will always continue to be an easy and popular target. But we need to be very careful that we balance these savings against the increase of time required, the increase in cost to constituents and at the local riding level, and the increase in inconvenience of constituents trying to contact their elected representatives.

We have to be concerned about the ability of the member of provincial Parliament to reasonably handle the increased workload that is liable to be caused not only by a larger constituent base and greater distances, but also by greater boondoggles and difficulties that may well occur with fewer government staff. That may require constituency office help and political intervention to bring about those timely resolutions to issues we talked about earlier.

In a nutshell, our concerns deal with the ability for farm and rural people to reach and get the attention from their rural representative they may well require from time to time. I think we all understand the nature of constituency work: There tend to be local matters pertaining to health, education, transportation and those types of things.

We're somewhat concerned for the negative impact on the rural economy of reduced representation and our ability to continue to create and build that climate for success that agriculture and this province need. We need a strong Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to provide the services, the information and the advice in many instances across this province, and to connect the people of the land with the people of Parliament. We can't have it both ways, I submit, not only to cut back on the ministries and the service to people in one way, but also to cut back in the political way.

As an organization, we have an abiding preference for open consultation and arriving at a new Ontario electoral boundaries model rather than necessarily opting to adopt the federal one, which may not have the best of implications or the best of results for the people of Ontario.

Having said that, I apologize. If I had taken a little more time, I could have used a few more political niceties and maybe expressed myself in softer ways, but I wanted to get the import of our message across in as timely a period as possible.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Kelly. You don't need to apologize for not using political niceties. Sometimes around here some people don't either.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Thank you for coming before us today and, in such a concise and focused manner, presenting what I see as the major issues re this whole piece of legislation. It seems, coming from a rural part of the province, that you would understand, probably more than anybody, the respect in this province that we've had over the years for tradition, for the evolution of processes, as opposed to radical change and, within a matter of a month or two, changing the balance of power in various jurisdictions.

In this instance government in Ontario, it seems to me, started out to respond to issues of rural concern because we were primarily rural. Slowly but surely we've become urban-centred. I don't think anybody would disagree that we need to sort out the balance of representation and the way we do democracy and that at this particular point in our history, with population shifts and changes, we would

want to revisit the question of how the Parliament is constituted. But to base it simply on a process that the federal government went through, to match that in a mirrored fashion and to want to do this in a period of a month and a half — because the government wants this done by the end of this session, which is December 12.

Normally in this province we have an arm's-length, objective commission established that goes out and talks to people in the rural area, that goes up to the north and talks to people in the north, that considers the very real issues of people in urban Ontario, and at the end of the day makes a presentation to government that is then looked at and approved or amended, whatever. In this instance there is no commission; there's simply a ramming through of a scenario that has been developed by the federal government that's now going to be applied to Ontario. Would you be supportive of, at this point in time, a commission going out and doing this in the way we've always done it in Ontario as opposed to the process that's now before us?

Mr Kelly: I'm not going to presume to suggest which is the best way of talking to and dealing with the real issues that people are concerned about, what the best way of dealing with that necessarily is. We need to continue to concentrate on the interdependence of rural and urban Ontario, not necessarily the differences between rural and urban Ontario. We need to understand each other's needs and deal with those needs. We need to bring together the people of this province and the sectors of the economy and the geographic locations rather than divide them.

My organization is not fearful of change; we are not against change. We are not in favour of change for the sake of change, but we're in favour of change that will take us from where we are to a better place.

I'm not sure if that fully answers your question. If you take a look at the first proposal that came out having to do with the northwest region — in our organization we have, if you will, our own ridings as well. Within the Ontario Federation of Agriculture we have 47 or 48 counties and we have 79 regions within those counties across the province. I have spent some time between Thunder Bay, Dryden, Kenora, Emo and Rainy River. I know what it's like up there. I know that no politician, at least none I've ever heard of or seen or dreamed of in this country, is going to be able to deal with a geographical area that is similar to the distance between Montreal and Chatham; that's not humanly possible.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr Kelly: I'd just like to add one more thing if I could, Mr Chairman. I realize we now have two spots up there. So now we're talking about a geographical area from Toronto to Montreal or from Toronto to Chatham, and I —

The Chair: Thank you. Mr O'Toole.

1040

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): Thank you very much, Ken. Good to see you again. I'm very familiar with the federation. I've met Tony Morris a number of times. Just to recognize the importance of agriculture — and I want that on the record — it's the second-largest industry, not just in Ontario but certainly in Durham East, my riding.

I think the most important thing you have brought up here is the importance of organizations like yours. Together with the changing organizational thing — we saw a couple of weeks ago how everyone is able to get all the teachers out or all the unions out through the Internet, blast fax or whatever else — communication technology has certainly changed in the last 30 or 40 years. You've got 79 regions in your organization, and that's communication. I think we can get over this barrier of the large land masses and truly represent those people, through technology and other kinds of — I also agree there should be support mechanisms in place for those very large ridings. That should be addressed and I'm sure it will.

To take all the politics out of it, I've looked at this right from the beginning. I know Dan McTeague, the Liberal MP from my area, worked very hard to change some of the boundaries for political reasons. Not one of the MPPs I'm aware of in Durham has tried to jig with the boundaries or their names, and whether it's a political party that designed them or not, we feel there were sufficient hearings. We're prepared to live with those boundary changes and represent all of the people, I believe, more effectively and more efficient. That's what this is about. We're not just going to reduce spending; we're looking at efficient use of taxpayers' dollars. After all, you and I are paying for it at the end of the day.

It's obviously up to the public to comment on the adequacy of their member. I look at some members and their commitment in the long term and the short term to their constituents. That's a real issue. There needs to be some measurement of accountability and I'm completely supportive of that.

But I want to share a bit of my time with Terence Young, who could review some of the numbers with you as well. I'd be pleased to meet with you after.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): I've been in this job now 15 months. I have an area that is partly rural and partly urbanized, like north Oakville and north Burlington. The reality is that most of the contacts with my constituents, over 80%, take place through my staff, no matter how much I'm in the office on the weekend and Fridays. That's done through correspondence and telephone etc. What I wanted to ask you is, can you think of any way administratively, perhaps by giving northern representatives additional resources — staff or expenses, whatever — you can get the same level of contact with a member that someone has, to address the distance issues?

I'll give you an example. I have two offices, one in north Oakville and one in north Burlington. The one in north Burlington, because of budgetary measures, I only keep open two days a week, but it is helpful to have a presence in that community. Can you think of any administrative ways we can support MPPs in the north?

Mr Kelly: I'm going to, if I may, start with Mr O'Toole's question. We understand. We've been pushing and working with Bell to deal with the whole issue of availability of communications. Down the road that is going to continue to improve. There are two or three pilot projects going on in northern Ontario right now that you're probably well aware of, having to do with satel-

lite, radio, telephone, fax and computer feeds and things like that, but we're not there yet. Some 34% of rural Ontario today — and we're talking about changes today and in the next year and a half — don't have access to a private line so that they can run either a fax or a modem, or even talk about personal business without fear of invasion of privacy.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Kelly. Unfortunately, it took too long to ask the questions to allow you any time to have any answers.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Kelly, let me say that your message came very clear. I have a couple of questions if I have the time, and one is that it seems that's not a problem of finding some money, finding some savings. It's a question of giving more accountability, making the system fairer, making the system more equitable. The bottom line we have heard, even from the previous presenter, is that we have to do more for less. Can you please tell me how less representation can produce better service or more service to more constituents?

Mr Kelly: I think the people of Ontario are prepared to pay for a reasonable level of service. Very simply, the issue is, what do people need, what do they want and how are people going to access what they need and want? As I mentioned earlier, 34% of the people can't get to a fax machine, can't have a private talk either with the constituency office or with their MPP because they don't have a private telephone line. They can't send a fax. They may well send a letter, but that's not necessarily how business is being done.

Where we're going and where we are and how fast we take to get there and how quickly people adapt to technology are all issues that need to be mixed into this. It may well be that overnight isn't the way to do it. It may be we need to leave some time for people to adapt and not only have access to but embrace the technologies we believe may well replace the personal contact. I don't know about you people around this table, but I know that where I come from we're people people. We're in the people business. People don't talk to answering machines. People don't talk to computers. People —

Mr Sergio: I have other questions.

Mr Kelly: Sorry. People talk to people, and people elected representatives to have someone to talk to when they had problems. I'm not sure we're going to be able to give people what they need at this point in time.

Mr Sergio: The political perception, because I think you said "political perception," is that diminishing the number of representatives will concentrate more powers in the Premier and his cabinet office, therefore making the various representatives, especially in the north and rural areas, less representative, with a lesser voice. Do you feel that may be the case?

Mr Kelly: Again, I'm not prepared to comment other than that when I vote, which I do at every election, I don't vote for someone to be a puppet to someone else's whims and desires; I vote for someone in my riding to represent me as a constituent and to take that message to Queen's Park. Whether you can control more people more easily or fewer people more easily, or whether that's even an issue, I'm not going to talk about. That's

the way it is from where I see it. I don't know how other people vote or what value systems they bring into the polling booth, but when I vote I want somebody who will listen to me when I have a problem, carry that message down and work for me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Kelly. We appreciate your input here this morning.

Mr Kelly: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I very much appreciate being given the time to speak with you, and I apologize if I ran a little long from time to time. I also apologize to Darren Hannah, who is the staff support person from our policy research department who accompanied me here today. Thank you for your time and your questions, and if you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

GAEL HEPWORTH

The Chair: Gael Hepworth, good morning and welcome to our committee.

Ms Gael Hepworth: Good morning. My name is Gael Hepworth. I'm a member of the City of York Community and Agency Social Planning Council. I came here today because those of us who are active in the city of York have some serious concerns about the manner in which this government is addressing our area of the city. Included in that is the fact that the seat of one of our provincial representatives will be redistributed into three of the federal seats as a result of this redistribution.

The major issue affecting our community is the fact that we are a very underserved area within Metro. We don't want to become the latest slum in Metro, or a new slum in Metro. We see that, if we don't have a voice at Queen's Park, the policies being conducted will result in that eventual activity.

Over the past 25 years I've been an active member and supporter of community groups and organizations in Metro and the city of York. I've made deputations and met with a broad range of individuals involved in the political process. For some time I've been concerned that the representation at the federal level has been both distant and ineffective. The sheer size of federal ridings and the lack of ongoing participation in local affairs has resulted in representatives who are out of touch with the communities they represent.

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This lack of contact with area residents is not as critical at the national level, due to the nature of the decision-making process in Ottawa. They are charged with the responsibility of acting on behalf of all Canadians, and it is the interplay between different regions of the country that is essential at that level. That does not mean that these boundaries reflect the needs for effective governance at the provincial level.

It is essential that voters remain connected to those who represent them. Poor voter turnout and lack of recognition for local representatives shows the degree to which people are alienated from those who rule in our society. We have recently seen voters turn to a more negative approach in democratic participation, with radical changes in governance at each electoral opportunity.

At the provincial level, the elected representatives must understand the impact of policies and practices upon local

communities. The division of power in Canada requires that the provincial level of government distribute programs, services, resources and policies that reflect the needs of local communities. The impact of this bill will effectively eliminate any effective provincial representation or response to issues in my community.

I would like to share some of these concerns with you. In the city of York we currently elect two provincial members of Parliament. One of those ridings would be replaced, with the distribution of three areas into surrounding ridings. In effect, our residents will be denied an opportunity to speak during the process of significant change at the local community level.

On the list currently are the closing of our local hospital — Northwestern General Hospital is one of the hospitals slated to close — and the elimination of the city of York, both at the council and the board of education level. It is essential that our very needy community can fully participate in the process of changing our governance structures. It is essential the services not be simply sloughed off but delivered in an accessible and effective manner. We need representatives who understand our local area needs and concerns to represent us. The redistribution along federal boundaries does not meet those needs.

One of the things our local social council does is assess the demographic information available from Statistics Canada and look at how that reflects in our local community. Our population in the city of York is 140,000 people. We have 16,000 children under the age of five in our community, with very few child care services available at all. The majority of child care services that are presently delivered in our community are delivered through the local school board. Elimination of our school board will decimate child care in our area.

Of our population, 13% are youth between the ages of 15 and 24 for whom employment is an ongoing challenge. We have 14% seniors in our community. There's 12.8% seniors in Metro; there's 13.7% in our community.

Our community is predominantly female-led, single-parent families who of course are tenants and are subject to the rent decontrol legislation you are currently looking at.

Our ethnoracial mix: 45% of our residents were born outside Canada. Teaching English as a second language is the number one concern for our educational needs in our city. Having access to employment is a high concern for our community.

Some 19.5% of our residents have less than a grade 9 education. This is significantly higher than in Metro or Ontario. We seriously need access to the resources you're talking about. If we're talking about pooling money, one of the reasons our board of education is effective is that the Metro governance structure for education pools funds and distributes them according to how many children we have. That has not happened at the municipal level. Our municipality has half the funds available to the board of education to spend for the people in our area.

Our labour force participation is a reflection of both language and education. Of course, it comes out that we have a higher rate of unemployment than anywhere else in Metro.

Our housing: We have a significant tenant population, and our tenant population cannot afford market rent. We have some subsidized housing units available in the area, but the reality is that no developer is going to come in and provide housing for our residents. They simply do not have the resources to pay for it.

The lack of services in our community includes no access to Canada Employment centre; no access to children's services; no citizenship and immigration office, even though we're a number one destination for immigrants; no health and welfare office; no Metro homes for the aged; and no Ontario Welcome House facility. The reason the City of York Community and Agency Social Planning Council was formed was to ensure that someone talked about these issues, that we made deputations at forums such as this and that our community's concerns were discussed.

One of the things I wanted to show you is this. This is a document our community worked hard on. It was our community economic development strategy. We won an award from the Royal Bank of Canada for doing this work.

We are a community where volunteer input is significant. Every one of our agencies has more than 200 volunteers who come out on a regular basis. We have two very active Meals on Wheels.

Senior citizens' developments: We have a number of senior citizens' agencies because we are a large senior citizens' community with low access to resources.

We are a very active and involved community. All we're asking is that as you put us through this process of reorganizing all of the mechanisms for the delivery of service, you rethink this distribution of elected officials and ensure that whatever boundaries are set in place are those that reflect the needs of local communities, not those that are simply sloughed off from Ottawa. There are two different governance processes and they are two different areas where community input is involved.

At this time I'd like to end my presentation.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Ms Hepworth. I appreciate your coming before us and making your presentation today. I want to bounce a couple of numbers off you. I don't want to be caught up in statistics, but you started your presentation — and I hope I'm not misquoting you on this — with the thought that right now York South was underrepresented, or perhaps overworked might be the flip side of that.

Ms Hepworth: The city of York.

Mr Gilchrist: The city of York? Okay, that basically is almost all encompassed within the riding of York South.

Ms Hepworth: No, it's not.

Mr Gilchrist: Without splitting hairs, looking at the fact that you actually have two members who overlap, it even makes the case better. Just to pick one of them, for example, York South is an area that has a lot of the concerns that you spoke of here today. A lot of the issues that our government is grappling with, whether health, education or other social problems, are evidenced in that area.

I just want to bring to your attention that York South had the grand total of 37,000 people in the June 8, 1995,

election, yet there are ridings in this province with over 90,000 voters. So the ability for the MPP currently to get around and meet and greet and see and be seen clearly is almost three to one over the opportunity for Minister Tsubouchi or Minister Palladini to get around their respective ridings. Under redistribution, it still only goes to 55,000 voters. Every riding south of the 401 in Scarborough, for example, will range from 63,000 to 69,000.

From my perspective, the federally appointed non-partisan boundary commission took into account certain differences even within the urban context. I just wanted to bring to your attention that there has been a reflection. We were confident that no matter where the boundaries were drawn, historically the boundary commission has always weighed those different factors. We had confidence in May 1994 when we made this commitment that they would do so again. We had no ability to gerrymander. It is strictly the federally appointed group that has made these decisions and I think they've done a fine job of balancing that.

1100

I guess my very short question to you would be, do you believe that to adequately represent York you need more than a 20% differential to, say, Scarborough, which has many of the same problems?

Ms Hepworth: No, I'm asking you to respect our historic boundaries in terms of the way our community functions, and in fact this does not do that.

Mr Grandmaitre: I'm glad you brought up the question of the megacity or the supercity that's on everybody's lips in Ontario, not only in Metro. As you know, with the new concept of this megacity, you'll be controlled, if I can use the word "controlled," or represented by 44 councillors — this is the formula that's before us now — plus a supermayor.

Right now, we're faced with Bill 81, redistribution, diminishing MPP representation throughout the province. With this new redistribution, Metro will be losing seven MPPs and the GTA will increase its number of MPPs by one, from 18 to 19. What I'm getting at is this government is trying to control politics not only at the local level, not only at the provincial level but at the federal level. They're quite satisfied and they're quite pleased to say, "Hey, the federal model is great," but this is the first time I've heard these people say that the federal government has done a good job.

They want to use the federal government's redistribution model and say, "Hey, if it's good enough for the feds, it's good enough for us," and we're saying: "No, it's not. We should have a model made for Ontario that represents the people of Ontario." I agree with you that you can't deal with education problems and health problems, social problems in your area, in your riding or in your city more adequately than you can at the present time. I think we should redo the riding boundaries so that they would reflect your real needs in your city and in my city.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your presentation. I was listening when you were saying that the federal redistribution should not necessarily be used for Ontario, and I agree with you that, as far as I'm concerned,

Ottawa did a terrible job of making sure that minority groups or regions are represented fairly in Ottawa, and now Mike Harris is doing the same thing in Ontario, where you're taking large areas and making them larger with no resources available.

In the area I represent, and we had a presentation just before you came in, rural Ontario, agricultural Ontario is still saying that we have party lines; we don't have the technology for people to be able to use fax machines or any of this. In northern Ontario probably 80% can't use the technology. So my argument is, why would Mike Harris say, "We'll let Ottawa call all the shots, and whatever they do, we'll do in Ontario," and that's going to be good for the people of Ontario, even though there are going to be large numbers of communities that are going to be muzzled?

Ms Hepworth: It's like a double whammy. Not only do you get shut out federally, but now you also get that reinforced provincially. One of the good things about having different boundaries was the fact that you could expect some kind of balance to happen as a result of those very different boundary structures.

Mr Len Wood: When it comes to the representatives federally in northeastern Ontario, there are three Liberal members there and they're saying it's going to be physically impossible to represent that area in Ottawa, and now the same boundaries are going to be applied to northern Ontario. Every municipality, mayor, reeve in northern Ontario, including the Sault Ste. Marie — there's an editorial saying it doesn't make any sense for Mike Harris to ram this legislation through and eliminate democracy in Ontario for large areas of the province.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Hepworth. We do appreciate your attendance with us this morning. Sorry we caught you a little out of breath there at the beginning, but thank you very much.

Before our next presenter comes forward, I'd like to beg the committee's indulgence. We have people coming and talking to us. I would appreciate it if we would listen while they talk to us and show them some respect.

JOHN SEWELL

The Chair: Mr Sewell, you have 20 minutes of our time to use as you see fit. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr John Sewell: I don't want to make any remarks whatsoever on how many ridings there should be in the Ontario Legislature. I believe that's a very difficult question and I'm willing to leave it to other people. But I do want to talk about two particular issues: first, the idea of giving city residents a fair chance in the legislative process and, second, something about specific riding boundaries.

One of the things that the new federal riding boundaries do is they tend to confirm the long-standing bias in Canada of giving more representation to rural residents than to city residents. In fact, I think one can say that the new federal riding boundaries are really unfair to city residents, and to that extent Bill 81 is also unfair.

What I did was look at some of the population figures for the current selected federal ridings. I must say it's not easy to get hold of the new report about the electoral commission. Of course, I'm not allowed access to the

legislative library. They said they had it; they wouldn't give it to me. The University of Toronto does not have it. I spent a fair amount of time at the Robarts library yesterday. I've had to use the 1991 figures, but I think they're generally accurate in terms of what's happening.

You can see rural ridings across the country on one side of the chart and city ridings on the other. Mention has been made, I think, of Markham or some of the large suburban ridings in the Toronto area which have an even larger population than anything shown here. I am aware that the new federal riding boundaries don't do much about this, that they confirm the bias in favour of rural residents. I think that's wrong and this mistake should not be confirmed again in Ontario.

There's a lot of talk today about the idea that the taxpayer should be given a fair break. Cities, as we know, are the engines of the country's economy and it's in cities that most taxpayers live. It's often been said that about half the tax dollars arriving in Ottawa are generated in the Toronto urban area. I'm not sure if those figures are exactly correct, but certainly more than a third of all tax dollars are generated in the Toronto urban area. Yet city residents don't have as much say in government as rural residents.

I think if taxpayers are going to be fairly represented in Ottawa or at Queen's Park, then it's only right that as individuals they, as city dwellers, get as much influence as rural dwellers. If you want to use the taxpayer argument, and I suspect some people might, then make sure you're giving fair representation to people who live in cities because they're the ones who pay the bulk of taxes, they're the ones who really make the economy hum in this country.

Bill 81 doesn't give them equal voice and to that extent it's a bad bill. It's as bad as what the federal government is doing. So I want a really simple principle, which is, do not draw riding boundaries which give rural residents more clout than city residents. One wants to reduce the number of ridings; that's fine. Just make sure that those of us who live in cities are not under-represented so that one of our votes is worth half of the vote of somebody who happens to live in the country. That's entirely unfair and it is not representative of taxpayers, if that's who you think you should be representing.

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The second issue has to do with fair riding boundaries. One of the issues I've been involved in from the early days of when I first got elected to Toronto city council is how you create riding boundaries that are fair to people. We had a big hearing in 1969 to create what was known in Toronto as block wards, where we tried to create a ward system with boundaries that ensured that people had a fair chance of representing those people who elected them, the people who lived in their ward or their riding.

The provincial and federal governments have never adopted that approach and they've always tried the strip approach in the centre of cities. So in the Rosedale riding, or to use its provincial counterpart, the St George-St David riding, you have the wealthiest people in the country in the same riding as the poorest people in the country. The wealthiest live in Rosedale, the poorest live

in Regent Park. So who is the MP or MPP to represent, the poor or the rich? They have different demands. They want their MP or their MPP to say different things. The people in Rosedale think that public services aren't all that terrific. They can do quite well on their own, they've got the resources. Whereas the people in Regent Park desperately need more services and are quite willing to see taxes raised in order to get those.

The MP or MPP is in an impossible position. He can't represent both, and one of those groups generally goes unrepresented. As it turns out in that riding, it's usually the people at the bottom who get unrepresented because poor people don't have the power of others. But it's entirely possible that at some point you could elect in that area somebody who said, "I don't care about people in Rosedale, I'm only going to represent people who live in Regent Park," and I think that would be unfair to people in Rosedale.

These new riding boundaries confirm that general kind of an approach, and it's wrong, because it means that certain people really get disfranchised. It's clear you can redraw riding boundaries to avoid that kind of a problem — never entirely, but almost entirely. I think the ward system in Toronto manages to do that in a fairly reasonable way.

I'm suggesting that one should not be compounding the bad policies of Ottawa here in Ontario. There is a decision being made to reduce the number of MPPs, and I'm not here to quarrel with that. But if that is going to happen, do it in a way that ensures city residents are fairly represented, at least as fairly as rural residents, and second, make sure that the riding boundaries that are drawn up do not mix different classes and income groups so that one of them doesn't get represented. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Sewell. We've got about four minutes per caucus beginning with the Liberals.

Mr Sergio: Mr Sewell, thank you very much for coming and making a presentation to our committee here today. There is perhaps a perception from what we have read and from former presenters here that this is more of a symbolic act that the government is imposing upon the people of Ontario than a factual fact. It is: Where is the fair representation with the proposed system? How is this going to save money and still manage to keep a fair democratic process? And I think that's what the crux of the question is. Is the present system being democratic? Is it delivering services? Is it being accountable? Will the proposal, as it is today, be making representatives more accountable, more effective, giving more fair representation to their people?

Mr Sewell: As I say, I'm not here to comment on the number of MPPs.

Mr Sergio: What about the services? What about delivery of representation to the various communities?

Mr Sewell: I don't have any comment on that. I have comment on two basic points which I think are key.

Mr Sergio: We don't disagree that some changes are needed. When we see ridings, for example, up in the north like Rainy River, represented by the leader of the third party, Mr Hampton, 19,000 or 20,000 people, versus Mr Palladini's area, which has 120,000 or 130,000

people, we see that some changes are needed in there. But we also believe that delivery of fair representation, services, is paramount to the political system and the accountability of that particular system. We have that concern.

Mr Sewell: What's the question to me?

Mr Sergio: As a citizen, do you have any concern with respect to that?

Mr Sewell: I might have some concerns but I have no comments on that today. There are two major issues, and if they aren't addressed, the other issues are almost irrelevant.

Mr Sergio: Then I'll pose to you one more question, and you may wish to comment or not, given your particular position. With a lot fewer politicians, do you think this will concentrate more power in the Premier's office and its inner cabinet, alienating a lot of the rural and northern members?

Mr Sewell: Let me just say this: The number of politicians you want to have is a very complex issue; it is not a simple issue. I don't think you can make too many really big generalizations. I know at a municipal level, if you have more than 25 people on a council, you're immediately into political parties and a centralization of power. That's one of the great problems with all the regional councils because they generally have more than 25 people. Beyond that, I don't have any useful comments for you. It's an extremely complex thing. To rush into it and say that we're going to do this or that is a very difficult thing. I don't have any comments once you get beyond 25.

Mr Martin: Mr Sewell, you make some good points here this morning, and certainly points we need to hear and try to get our heads around. You are probably aware, or may not be, that not long before you we had a rep from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture making an argument to make sure they don't lose any of the clout they have and their ability to influence decisions that are made that affect them. There's that need to find some balance.

Mr Sewell: With respect to the balance, I think that one person, one vote is not a bad one. I don't know a better principle. But to say that because you happen to be a farmer you deserve twice as much clout as anybody else, I think that's dumb. Or that because you live in a town rather than a city, you deserve twice or three times the clout of someone. That's a bad principle. One person, one vote is a pretty good one, and that's the basis on which I'm asking we proceed.

Mr Martin: Traditionally in this province, in our attempt to balance the concerns of northern Ontario and rural Ontario and the cities as we've evolved as a province re the mix of population, we've not taken a very simplistic approach. We've tried to be sophisticated. We've set up commissions that took into consideration things like diversity of community or diversity of interests, which I think speaks to your second point: means of communication, topographical features, population trends, varying rural and urban electoral districts, existing boundaries of municipalities and wards, and a number of other things. Is there any value to that to you?

Mr Sewell: There's a small value, but as I say, there's an overriding question. In our culture there's an over-

whelming bias against cities. Cities are considered to be bad places — people should move out of them — and they've been consistently underrepresented. They're treated as though they're nothing. Right? This is why we're in a position where Prince Edward Island has provincial powers but in Ontario there are 10 cities larger than Prince Edward Island and they have no powers at all. That's part and parcel of the bias.

The idea that you would underrepresent city people is one that's part of our culture. Everybody says: "Of course, that's the case. We have to overrepresent farmers" — that's generally the argument — "because they protect the land." Hey, come on. They're the biggest polluters we know.

Interjections.

Mr Sewell: It's true. Take a look at who's producing most of the contamination in streams. It's a serious problem.

Mr Young: We all eat the food.

Mr Sewell: We all eat the food. There's no reason we have to pollute streams to produce food that is edible.

The point I want to make is that there's no reason why those of us who live in cities shouldn't have at least as much say as people who live in rural areas. It's a really simple point. But the cultural bias is against it, and what I'm trying to do is argue against that cultural bias. It's in cities that the economies are created, that our social structures are created, that our values are created, and I believe they should have a much more significant say in the politics of the country.

The argument I am making here is a really simple one: Just don't hurt somebody because they live in a city and say, "Your vote is not worth as much someone else." Start on the principle of one person, one vote. That's the way I think riding boundaries should be designed.

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Mr O'Toole: Mr Sewell, thank you very much for your presentation. I've heard many of them since starting with Bill 163.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, as has been mentioned by my colleague, would disagree with you quite vehemently.

Mr Sewell: Right, I agree.

Mr O'Toole: I'm certain you know that. They consider themselves the producers and the hewers of wood and the cities as the consumers. There aren't many grain fields or Holstein cows in Toronto.

Mr Sewell: Correct.

Mr O'Toole: To me, the federal-provincial alignment and its constituent organization are transparent to the constituent. When they phone my office in Durham East, they don't know what the issue is, whether it's federal, provincial or municipal. I think we're overrepresented in Ontario. Would you agree that we're more overrepresented than anywhere else in the world? By the time you take the utilities, the trustees, the provincial and the federal, we've got everyone totally confused and overrepresented.

I take great exception to the reference to fair riding boundaries and its assumption, which I won't let stand unchallenged. You say very clearly: "...and the poorest people — living in Regent Park. Whose interests should the MP or MPP represent, since" — your assumption — "he clearly cannot represent both?" I take great exception

to that. It's a purely ideologically purposed argument that you're making versus an idealist's argument. I'm naïve enough to believe that I should represent all of the people all of the time and take their concerns to Queen's Park or the municipal table, whatever. If you disagree with that, you disagree with the fundamentals of what the duty of an elected person really is.

Mr Sewell: No. Let me just comment on that: I believe very strongly that the political representatives do their best to represent the people who elect them, but I believe —

Mr O'Toole: That's why we're held in such poor esteem. You think we're representing vested interests.

Mr Sewell: Maybe one of the reasons they're held in bad esteem is that you get someone to come and you won't let them speak, right?

Mr O'Toole: I'm listening.

Mr Sewell: Thank you very much. I believe, having been a politician for some years, that it's impossible to represent all points of view; it just is literally impossible. What usually happens is that the strongest people in your riding are the ones whose views you represent most. When you're in a riding where there are very wealthy and very poor people, I know that poor people don't get represented. Their views do not come to the fore for all sorts of reasons: they aren't sophisticated enough to know how to do it; you don't meet them at your cocktail parties; and on and on. It's a fact of life.

What you should try and do is devise riding boundaries which put the same kind of people in them so the job of the political representative is made easier. You only have one general kind of person, with all of the differences that involves, to represent. I'm not trying to denigrate MPPs or MPs or political representatives; I'm trying to say, let's be honest about how difficult the job is.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Thank you, Mr Sewell. I'm very sympathetic to your first point. You're not ready to talk about the total number of MPPs, and I respect that. I want to give you two examples. Right now in the riding of Rainy River there are 19,000 voters; in the riding of York Centre there are 129,000. That's a 6.5-to-1 ratio.

Mr Sewell: Crazy.

Mr Maves: This legislation will change that. Rainy River will now have 53,000; York Centre will have 73,000.

Mr Sewell: Crazy.

Mr Maves: But the difference is quite substantially smaller.

Mr Sewell: So what?

Mr Maves: Would you at least admit that is headed in the right direction?

Mr Sewell: There's no question it's headed in the right direction, but it's not good enough. We've had this bias for too long. I personally believe we'd have a fundamentally different kind of politics in this country if cities were given fair representation — much different politics than we've now got. One person, one vote. Why should we say that someone in the city riding you mentioned should have two thirds of the vote as somebody in Rainy River? What's so terrific about those people?

Mr Maves: I agree 100%.

Mr Sewell: Good. That's terrific. Then we're going somewhere.

Mr Maves: When you draw boundaries you can't have, say, 75,000 voters in every riding time immemorial. There will be some discrepancy.

Mr Sewell: Of course there will be, and I'm quite willing to live with that. What I'm not willing to live with is the overwhelming bias of the current figures, and that's what we've got. If we said that we've got to get rid of that overwhelming bias, that would be a good start. Say: "One person, one vote. Yes, it's going to be a bit of this and a bit of that." I agree about those difficulties, and it does get into the question of how you make sure these kinds of people are all generally the same so that other interests don't get —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Sewell. We appreciate you attending with us this morning and giving us your input.

CANADIAN TAXPAYERS FEDERATION

The Chair: Our next presenter is Paul Pagnuelo, executive director, Ontario, of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Good morning, sir. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Paul Pagnuelo: Good morning. First of all, unfortunately, I didn't have much time or much advance notice in terms of the appearance today, so my remarks are going to be brief and I would prefer to spend time in question and answer.

The government has introduced Bill 81, which will pare down the number of MPPs from 130 to 103. That's a cut of more than 20%. Obviously it's a heated debate, as I, sitting here in the last several minutes, could notice from some of the comments.

There are those who are going to cry blue murder over the fact that the size of the Legislature is coming down, that it's being downsized. You always get people who will argue that big government is good government and that the bigger the government, the better the government; that Ontario probably needs more legislators to represent the population, not fewer; and that perhaps the Harris proposition to cut the number of MPPs is nothing more than a cynical ploy to shore up voter support.

I'd like to take a more objective view. I think the taxpayers and electors should share the move to a smaller Legislative Assembly, and in the time available this morning I'd like to offer four short reasons why.

Number one, it will save money. Because the new provincial boundaries will correspond to federal electoral districts, taxpayers will definitely save on MPPs' salaries, expenses and, to some degree, staff, and on the cost of planning and running elections.

We'll be the first to acknowledge that the savings that are going to be achieved are only going to be a very small drop in a very large bucket, but nevertheless today it's important that we look at the fact that every dollar saved adds up. Ontarians will reap \$2.1 million annual savings in MPPs' salaries alone. That's \$2.1 million that the Legislature itself can contribute to reducing the province's deficit.

We've all collectively got to make every effort. Ontarians everywhere are being asked to sacrifice in terms of reducing our reliance on government and

looking at more efficient ways of delivering government services. Again, a lot of this is leadership. The average voter out there looks to our elected representatives to demonstrate leadership in action, not just in words. Yes, it is symbolic to a large degree, but symbolism means a lot to people out there.

Number two, it will restore the principle of one person, one vote. As they now stand, Ontario's electoral boundaries are anything but democratic. Suburban voters, for example, are grossly underrepresented. Their votes are worth less than those in the cities or rural areas. The new boundaries will provide a much purer although, I'm going to acknowledge quite clearly, not perfect form of representation by population, which is a cornerstone of western democracy.

It's going to prevent gerrymandering. Manipulating constituency boundaries to secure the greatest possible advantage for the governing party is a well-honed practice in politics. Bill 81 will reduce the likelihood of gerrymandering in Ontario by adopting the boundaries set out by the impartial federal electoral boundaries commission. In aligning the new boundaries based on work done by a body outside the Legislature's jurisdiction, the number of seats held by each party should more accurately reflect the votes cast in any given election.

It emphasizes the need for fiscal responsibility. I talked about this briefly. Ontarians will only accept the need for spending reductions, which incidentally are absolutely necessary, if they are applied fairly across the board. Saving the perks, pay and jobs of politicians while the rest of the population is forced to tighten its collective belt would be sheer hypocrisy. Since assuming office, Premier Harris has taken some very bold steps and done more than any Ontario Premier before him in providing leadership by example. They may be symbolic issues, but again, they're important to many voters.

More important, I think credit is due to the Legislature as a whole, to every member. By agreeing to legislative initiatives such as scrapping the MPPs' gold-plated pension plan and tax-free allowances, putting party politics aside, the fact that all parties agreed and moved forward quickly on that sort of initiative sent a very symbolic but important message to voters across the province that they're prepared to make the cuts among themselves as well as to government programs.

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Getting the province's fiscal house in order isn't an easy job. Looking back, if the consequences of high annual deficits and debt had been appreciated at the time, I doubt the previous governments would have followed the route they did, and that's previous governments of any political stripe, because today the sad reality is that we're trading program spending for debt interest.

I think each of the three parties is committed to the objective of balancing the budget, paying down the debt and reducing the punitive burden of debt interest. Where there's going to be a disagreement, and there is obviously, is how to reach that objective and within what time frame. But I would ask you now collectively to continue providing the example that voters are looking for in their politicians by reducing the number of MPPs in this Legislature to match the federal boundaries for this province.

In closing, I would also like to call on the Premier today to continue what I would call his good housecleaning spree by next firing his guns on the political donation tax credit, which is used to subsidize country club memberships, suits, dry cleaning, what have you, for party officials and MPPs. It's unfair that taxpayers are being forced to pay not only for the weenie roasts and golf games of party members, but also for political views and opinions that they oppose. So we think that that's another area where the system could be made fairer for everybody.

I'd like now to respond to questions which you might have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Pagnuelo. Beginning with the New Democrats, Mr Wood, we've got about four minutes per caucus.

Mr Len Wood: I might some save some time for Mr Marchese. You've made an excellent presentation in covering a lot of different areas. It seems like your concern is that there'll be money saved by reducing the number of MPPs, and yet we know, from what we're hearing, that all the money that's being saved on this, or a lot of it that's being saved on this, is going to be used to put extra staff in the Premier's office and add to the cost of running the government. So a lot of the savings that there might be — you're saying \$2.1 million — are going to be spent around —

Mr Pagnuelo: I haven't heard that earlier discussion. If that were to be the case in terms of we're going to save \$2.1 million here and add a whole bunch of extra staff over and above what exists today —

Mr Len Wood: It's been in the newspapers.

Mr Pagnuelo: Well, I think that would be a terrible mistake.

Mr Len Wood: You call on the Premier to continue his good housecleaning spree by firing his guns at other things. We know that these things are not going to happen. This is strictly a political agenda by a Conservative Party that is coming forward and saying, "This is what we promised during the election campaign and we're not going to look at the electoral boundaries commission; we're just going to put in a Conservative agenda which is going to be on the next election, without consulting like the federal government did." The federal government had a study done on electoral boundaries, and the province is not doing that.

Mr Pagnuelo: I guess my response to that would be, if the federal government found that those boundaries were appropriate for Ontario, do we need to go through another study that says they're not for Ontario in terms of provincial politics?

Mr Len Wood: Yes, we do. We don't agree with them.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I'm going to place, Mr Pagnuelo, two questions, if I can quickly. One has to do with the fact that they say they will save \$11 million. That may or may not be entirely accurate, but there's some savings if you get rid of politicians. People like that. People like getting rid of politicians because, by and large, we have helped to contribute creating an atmosphere out there to the public that politicians are not to be valued. I'm saddened by that. I didn't say you said

this necessarily; I said we here are contributing to this. But if we have one referendum, as they support, and I'm not sure where you are and your position with referendums —

Mr Pagnuelo: I'll explain to you where we are.

Mr Marchese: But one referendum will cost \$25 million. Do you think that's a better saving for the province — to have referendums — versus having MPPs who can represent their ridings in a way I think they need to be? In the northern ridings, you're going to have bigger ridings than some countries — like Belgium, as one example. Will they be able to adequately represent people when you do that, and do you care about that?

Mr Pagnuelo: I guess the question I have is when you talk about representing people, what do you mean by "representation"? Is it responding to their daily phone calls, their letters? Is it carrying their collective views back to Queen's Park? Is it ensuring that there's a proper balance of voters to MPPs that is fairly distributed across the province, whether it's per capita one in 100,000 or one in 50,000, whatever the magic number may be?

The whole issue of a reduction of the number of MPPs isn't because people hate politicians as such. You know, let's get rid of politicians. People are sitting back today and they're seeing in their own environments, in their own work environments, regardless of what it is that you do, that everybody is cutting back, that we're making do with fewer managers at the top, the workers are expected to do more.

I think, if we look at the history of the Legislature, things haven't dramatically changed in terms of how we run governments. I think there's an opportunity here for politicians to re-examine what their roles are and how they can better perhaps allocate their time to put more emphasis on —

The Chair: Mr Pagnuelo, unfortunately we have to stick to the time. It's very tight.

Mr Young: Mr Pagnuelo, nice to see you again. I want to assure you that when you speak on behalf of your members every member of this government listens carefully, and I appreciate we've had a number of conversations one on one. I totally agree with you that the Premier's done more than any other Ontario Premier before him in providing leadership by example.

There's one issue here related to matching the ridings to the federal which I'm particularly pleased about, and that is, if you ask the average voter on the street I bet you half or more don't know what riding they live in federally or provincially, and if we match them up they'll know who to call more readily when they have a provincial concern or issue and a federal concern or issue. Can you comment on that?

Mr Pagnuelo: Absolutely, but I would even go further. A lot of people that we're in contact with on a regular basis, our own members, many don't understand the difference between an MP and MPP. Let's start with the very basics, let alone what riding they perhaps are in.

The number of calls that I take and respond to where people think it's a federal issue and it's a provincial issue, or vice versa, is just absolutely unbelievable. We also find that that same thing happens in terms of municipal politics, that many people think that what is a municipi-

pal issue is really a provincial or a federal issue. There's so much confusion out there. People just don't understand what the roles of each of the various legislatures or municipal councils are.

We think, in terms of simplicity, it would make life a lot easier for the average voter out there if they knew: "This is my riding and I'm served by this MP and this MPP and it serves all of us; I haven't got an MPP who serves me and some other neighbours, and an MP in Ottawa who serves a different constituency and I might happen to be part of that." So I think that's where there's some commonality.

Again, you can't downplay the cost savings in terms of working collectively with our federal partners in terms of not duplicating effort.

Mr Young: Serving the taxpayers better.

Mr Pagnuelo: Yes.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Paul. I hope that the explanation you gave of duplication of a federal member or the provincial member, as you well know, you live in my riding —

Mr Pagnuelo: I live in your riding, John —

Mr O'Toole: — and do you have two —

Mr Pagnuelo: — and I've got a different federal member. My riding is different federally.

Mr Young: It's a constant problem, a real problem. I'm sure many of the members here experience that, but now just to reiterate, I believe you've made a couple of very good arguments and I think the taxpayers expect no less than more effective and more affordable representation. We're overrepresented not just at the provincial level but I'd say the municipal level as well, but it's effective representation.

Are you pleased or have you got any other encouragement for this government to move forward with its agenda, with the possible exception of the tax credit thing? That may be a problem.

Mr Pagnuelo: Well, certainly on this issue move forward. If people don't like what the new federal boundaries are and if there's a sense that there's still not a proper balance, then let's go back and work with our federal partners. But obviously the federal government and the three political parties in Ottawa felt that they were appropriate. And if they're appropriate in a federal context, I fail to see why those same boundaries aren't appropriate provincially here in Ontario.

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Mr Sergio: You said something that I totally agree with, that it is very symbolic to a great deal, that the savings are a drop in the bucket. If that is the case — and according to the last comment by Mr O'Toole, he says people don't know whose problem it is, if it's municipal, a Metro problem, an MPP's problem, a federal problem — how are we going to improve the situation, this fair representation, this effective representation, by increasing most ridings by some 20,000 or 30,000 constituents?

Mr Pagnuelo: That has absolutely nothing to do with improving people's understanding of the differences between the federal role and the provincial role.

Mr Sergio: That won't change, right? You're still going to have the same problem, right?

Mr Pagnuelo: No, no. You'll still have a problem in terms of distinguishing what the difference is and the roles of each government, but it will be a lot easier to know who your member is because you'll know what riding you're in. You're not going to be worrying about the fact that you're in one riding provincially and in another riding federally.

Mr Sergio: It may be the case that you may know in which riding you'll be living, but when you're calling anyone for any particular problem, you may not know, as the normal taxpayer out there, whether it is an MPP's problem, an MP's problem, a Metro councillor, a local councillor.

Mr Pagnuelo: A change in boundary ridings isn't going to change that issue in terms of, "Is my issue a federal issue or a provincial issue or a municipal issue?"

The Chair: One short question, Mr Grandmaître.

Mr Grandmaître: One very short question. By the way, you're absolutely right, people are crying the blues. You've got the right colour.

You also say it will save money; it emphasizes the need for fiscal responsibility. I have one very short question: Do you agree that MPPs should have the same budget as MPs to serve their public or their constituents?

Mr Pagnuelo: I think whatever it takes to do the job properly.

Mr Grandmaître: Do you agree that we should be getting the same amount of money to serve our people as MPs are getting?

Mr Pagnuelo: I think when it comes to serving your people, you have to look at the issues you deal with versus the issues the federal government deals with.

Mr Grandmaître: So you agree then?

Mr Pagnuelo: I would say that they shouldn't be matched. In fact, perhaps you should be receiving more.

Mr Grandmaître: Well, that's better.

Mr Sergio: Coming from you, that's a surprise.

Mr Pagnuelo: Let me go one step further: Whether the number is 50,000 per MPP or 100,000 per MPP in terms of constituents that you serve, the most important thing is that the concerns they have — because, let's face it, most will not reach an MPP regardless of the numbers. It's physically impossible for you to deal with everybody but it's vitally important that you have staff that people can reach. The strength of all of us, of all of you is your staff. So the one thing I say and taxpayers say don't scrounge on is your own staff who are going to support constituency offices or your offices here in Queen's Park, because that's where the concerns of people can be heard and can be brought forward to the Legislature.

Mr Grandmaître: Are you telling us that MPPs can hide behind staff and say, "They are to blame; that's not the minister"?

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): That's not what he said.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Pagnuelo. We do appreciate your input here this morning.

That's our last presenter for the morning. The clerk has our travel packages for us for Ottawa and London. In addition to that, I would like to deal with this issue of requests from members of the Legislature to appear, to have status before the committee. We've had two written

requests now. It's an unusual situation, so I'd like to have us arrive at a decision here.

Mr Grandmaître: I agree with you that it is unusual. But I spoke to the House Clerk, and I was told that by unanimous consent we can have MPPs making representation. Since northern Ontarians are dearly affected by Bill 81, at least two of our MPPs have requested that they appear before this committee when this committee visits the north. We have, if I'm not mistaken, David Ramsay, who would like to appear before this committee when we meet in Timmins, and the other one is Frank Miclash, when we appear in his riding. I think it's only reasonable and I wouldn't mind having your own people making representation to this committee.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I don't feel that members should be making presentations to these hearings. The hearings are for the purpose of listening to what the public have to say on the subject. I think we as members get our opportunity in the House, so I disagree with having them make presentations.

Mr Young: I would, given the opportunity, vote against it. The members have ample opportunity to address these issues in the House. This is an opportunity, quite an expensive one and a meaningful one, to go out and listen to the taxpayers and the voters. I don't think I want to take that time to listen to more politicians.

Mr Len Wood: I don't have a problem with people making presentations. Now we know we have David Ramsay and Frank Miclash wanting to make presentations, I would be disappointed if the Conservative caucus tried to muzzle some of their own backbenchers who might want to come forward and make presentations based on some of the presentations we've heard today from the rural and agricultural areas. We're going to hear more from northern presentations, and I don't have a problem with that.

Because you're affecting the democratic process, elected MPPs should be able to come forward and make their own presentation, whether it be in Dryden, Timmins, Sault Ste Marie, Ottawa or London. I think they should have that right to be able to come forward, because this piece of legislation is affecting a lot of staff out there and a lot of MPPs out there. It's seriously affecting the wellbeing of the MPPs as well.

Mr Sergio: I hope they will seriously rethink their position and not view this as a political opportunity. I myself have no idea what the requirements and needs of the people up north are versus the people I represent here in Metro. The only thing I know is that people are people but needs could be different. They cover a huge territory up there, which I would love to be familiar with. Those people know what it takes, what's involved, to fairly represent those people. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having an elected representative speak on behalf of their people, especially a lot of those who can't reach and make representation to the committee.

Further, Mr Chairman, I see you have travelled on other committees, and I bring to the attention of the members the last one which travelled, where a lot of people made first, second and third presentations on the same item, representing other people. All right? I wonder what the difference is when an elected member asks to

speak on behalf of his or her own people versus someone who gets on the agenda and says, "This person now is speaking on my behalf," solely to get on the agenda.

I call on you to shed some light and some justice. We invite your members to come and make representation. But you have to be aware, and I hope the members are aware as well, that other methods are thought of to come out and make a representation, and we have seen that. We have brought that to the attention of the Chair and the members of the committee. While we thought that was an unfair practice, we still heard those concerns from whoever. So I hope you people will rethink this and allow the members to make representation.

The Chair: Just so we can tighten up the discussion a little bit and not turn this into a three-hour discussion, is there a possible compromise here, since the way of assigning spots for presentation is based on each caucus having the ability to assign 25% of the spots, that we could leave this to the discretion of each caucus, and if they want to schedule some of their members into their assigned spots, they have the option to do that? I would entertain a motion to that effect, if somebody sees that as a compromise.

Mr Gilchrist: I don't think a motion is required, Mr Chairman. That's totally within the purview to send a substitution form to the clerk at any time.

Mr Grandmaître: No, no, no.

The Chair: No, it's not in the form of a substitution, it's in the form of 25% of the spots are allocated to the government, to the official opposition and to the New Democrats; the other 25% are to a fourth list of people who just call in. What I'm suggesting is a compromise that would say that if the Liberals in Dryden want to have Frank Miclash make a presentation, they assign him one of their 25% of the spots.

Mr Maves: I'm a little bit disturbed by this, because I think that members have an opportunity in the House and in the hallways — I see Mr Miclash all the time, and Mr Ramsay, and I know Mr Miclash has already spoken to the bill in the House. Hearings are public hearings; they're for the public to come and tell us their feelings on bills. If we start having members come in to speak about bills on committee time, the committee just becomes another forum for members to speak their piece. I think it should be for the public.

No matter how we try to do it or how we try to slice it, I think it's dangerous, because we're taking away opportunities from the public and it defeats the purpose of public committees. Why would we travel to Dryden to hear Mr Miclash? What a terrible waste of money that would be. Really. I can go to his office and hear from him. Why do I need to travel to Dryden for that?

Mr Len Wood: He travels to Toronto to hear you all the time.

Mr Sergio: That's very unfair.

Mr Martin: I frankly don't understand the fear here —

Interjections: Fear?

Mr Martin: — the fear of having a duly elected politician appear before the committee, but I guess it's consistent, actually, with the underlying intent of this bill, to diminish the role of politicians and the role of this Legislature in the business of this province.

This bill is a fundamental attack on the traditions of this province and the way we govern ourselves and is as serious a piece of business as anything that's been before us or will be before us. So it behooves us to hear from anybody, including members who want to speak to it.

The other thing is it's also, in my mind, an attack on the integrity of politicians. I think politicians should be, because of that as well, allowed a chance, even if it's only for 20 minutes, to put their thoughts on the record in a formal fashion, as would happen in the case of somebody coming before this committee.

I'd be in agreement with your compromise. I think it's a great idea, and in the spirit of respecting the right of each party to bring before a committee whomever they feel is the best spokesperson for them on a particular issue representing their constituents or the province, we should move in that direction and not be afraid of this.

Mr Grandmaître: Before we started this morning, I think we approved what the subcommittee had decided on, the number of hours and where we would travel. I'm not trying to deviate from the subcommittee's agreement, if you want to call it an agreement, but I'll give you an example, Mr Chair. Today we have four openings, and you don't think that an MPP can take one of these slots?

I'm not asking you to go beyond the hours that were agreed upon; I'm not asking you for this. If there is room to accommodate an MPP, I think we should accommodate an MPP. It doesn't matter what side of the House he's from. I'm not asking you to go beyond what the subcommittee accepted; I'm asking you to simply respect the request of MPPs. I find it very unfair. I realize that MPPs can be listened to in the House every day, but at the same time I think when we go to their ridings they should be respected.

The Chair: We still have two more people who want to speak to this, but we are being called to the House for a vote, so we will recess until 3:30, at which time, during one of the openings this afternoon, we'll continue the discussion. This needs unanimous consent or a motion put forward that would be voted on and either accepted or rejected.

The committee recessed from 1155 to 1634.

The Chair: Time is a bit of a precious commodity this afternoon, so we will begin. As I understand it, we have probably somewhere in the vicinity of 80 minutes to deal with five deputations. If it's all right with the deputants, to be fair to everybody, I'd like to cut those down to about 16 minutes apiece. Can I have unanimous consent for that? Agreed.

GRAHAM WHITE

The Chair: The person who is our first presenter, Mr Green, is in the building somewhere, but Professor White, the early bird gets the worm in this case. Welcome.

Dr Graham White: I suppose I'm a witness of a different colour if Mr Green can't be here.

Mr Chairman, honourable members, thank you for the opportunity to speak about Bill 81. In my view this bill, if passed, would seriously erode the quality of democracy in Ontario. This bill is ill advised and ought not to be supported.

Public debate on this bill has largely focused on how it will adversely affect the representation of Ontario residents, particularly those who live in northern Ontario. It is to me a self-evident proposition that the quality of representation in the Legislature will decline if the same number of people are served by substantially fewer MPPs. I do not accept the argument that if 103 MPs can satisfactorily represent Ontarians in Ottawa, then 103 MPPs can equally well represent Ontarians at Queen's Park. The policy fields within the province's constitutional jurisdiction — health, education, social welfare and municipal government, for example — are of far greater day-to-day significance for people than are the matters falling under federal jurisdiction and therefore place a heavier burden on provincial members.

However, I do not propose to pursue this line of argument. Doubtless the committee will hear more about this in its travels through the north. Rather my presentation raises issues that have not generally been addressed in the public debate on this bill. I suggest that Bill 81 would produce a significant decline in the quality of Ontario democracy in the following interrelated ways:

(1) It would increase the likelihood of serious and unacceptable distortions in how accurately the composition of the Legislature reflects the voters' expressed preferences.

(2) It would contribute to the centralization of power in the cabinet.

(3) It would seriously reduce the effectiveness of the Legislature.

Let me elaborate.

Electoral distortions: In our first-past-the-post electoral system, MPPs win election by attracting more votes than any other candidate, regardless of whether the winning candidate has 25%, 40% or 60% of the vote. It is well known that, in the aggregate, this system means that voters often do not get the Legislature they voted for. Typically, this system overrewards the party that wins the largest share of the vote, so that, for example, the current government enjoys a large legislative majority having won only about 45% of the vote and the previous government also won a strong majority of the seats with less than 38% of the vote.

What is less well known but is clearly the case is the fact that these undemocratic distortions are more pronounced the smaller a Legislature is for a given number of electors. Consider if each voter had his or her own electoral district. The resulting Legislature would be perfectly representative of how the public votes. Now consider if one riding encompassed the entire province. This would produce an extremely distorted House, since no matter what proportion of the electorate voted for parties other than the winning party, these parties would go unrepresented in the House. These are of course absurd situations, but they help to illustrate how and why distortions worsen as House size decreases.

It is no accident that the worst distortions of our electoral system are found in smaller legislatures: the government winning 31 out of 32 seats on the basis of 54% of the vote in the most recent Prince Edward Island election and the government winning all 58 seats in New Brunswick in 1987 on the basis of 60% of the vote.

Yesterday's Toronto Star contained numbers by Graham Murray and Alan Hall which allege that if you transpose the results from the 1995 provincial election on to the current federal boundaries, you would produce a Legislature of 73 Conservatives, 23 Liberals and seven New Democrats. This is an example of how the distortion of the first-past-the-post system becomes worse as the Legislature is smaller for a given number of electors.

Such unfair and undemocratic results are made more likely by reducing the number of ridings, as proposed in Bill 81.

1640

Increasing the cabinet's power and weakening the Legislature: A Legislature dramatically reduced in size is likely to increase the power of cabinet because private members, government as well as opposition, will have less capacity to review its actions and to influence its decisions.

On the government side, a smaller government back bench is likely to be a weaker government back bench, both in terms of overall talent and in terms of clout with cabinet. A government caucus in which close to half the members are ministers is more likely to be dominated by cabinet than a caucus where only one out of three or four MPPs is a minister.

While the relative influence of the government backbenchers over cabinet is an important issue, it is on the opposition side that the numbers question is really critical. The Legislature is our central democratic institution. A healthy, effective Legislature requires a strong, effective opposition. Under Bill 81, opposition caucuses will necessarily be smaller. Moreover, as I showed earlier, opposition caucuses are likely to be disproportionately smaller than they are today. This will seriously weaken the Legislature in two ways.

First, opposition members will simply be too thinly stretched to do an effective job. There will not be enough of them to adequately cover the myriad activities of the government and to hold it to account for its policies and their administration. In addition, since MPPs will have more constituents to look after, they will have even less time to devote to their duties as legislators. An effective opposition may be an irritant to the government, but it is an essential component of our British parliamentary system.

Second, the committee system will be significantly weakened for the simple reason that there will not be enough MPPs to make it work. To an extent, this reflects the overall reduction in the number of private members available to serve on committees. Assuming a 20-member cabinet, and removing the Speaker as well, there will be 82 instead of 109 private members.

The total number is, however, misleading, for the real numbers crunch will come because of the large reductions in the size of party caucuses. This is most likely to be a problem for the opposition parties, but it is not hard to imagine a situation where government lacks sufficient numbers of back benchers to do committee work. The almost inevitable result will be fewer committees doing less work.

As a lover of theatre, I greatly enjoy the spectacle of question period, but as someone who worked for several

years for legislative committees in this building, I know that the most effective, most meaningful work of the Legislature is done in committees like this one. It is no accident that, of all the provinces, Ontario has the most active, effective committee system as well as the largest House. This important part of our Legislature will suffer markedly without adequate numbers of MPPs to serve on committees.

In sum, Bill 81 promises to worsen the undemocratic distortions of our electoral system, further centralize power in the cabinet and undermine the effectiveness of the Legislature. These are serious consequences that far outweigh any potential monetary savings. Thank you.

Mr Young: Thank you, Professor. I wanted to ask you to comment, please, on the committee system and how your thoughts might change if the actual cabinet were smaller, as our cabinet is, and if the committees were smaller, because we sit with 15. We take 15 people all over the province and there's a lot of expense associated with that. I personally think that a lot of the work we do in committees could be done by much smaller committees. Wouldn't the ratio bear out and produce a logical representative result if you had smaller committees and a smaller cabinet?

Dr White: To answer the first question first, I'm not sure that there's much leeway in the size of the cabinet. You can't really expect the cabinet to go much below 15, and those extra five backbenchers you'd get I don't think would make a significant difference.

You raise an interesting question on the size of committees. I'm not sure they need to be 15. However, having worked on committees, it seems to me that it's asking simply too much and it is unfair to have caucuses represented by a single member on the opposition side, which is effectively what you would be suggesting. I don't think that's fair. It doesn't make for an effective committee. You need at least two members per caucus to make a committee work.

Mr Maves: You made a point that I have a problem with; that is, that the policy fields that the provincial government deals with "are of far greater day-to-day significance for people than" federal. I worked for a federal member before I was a provincial member and I dealt with, on a daily basis, Canada pension plan problems, unemployment insurance plan problems, Revenue Canada problems, old age security problems — I could go on and on; it's a huge list. I can assure you from my experience that they're no less significant for people than what I deal with as a provincial member. How did you come to that conclusion?

Dr White: I certainly don't underestimate the workload of federal members, and yes, there are significant social programs that are the responsibility of the federal government for which people go to their MPs. However, if you look at the jurisdiction of the province, most social welfare measures are provincial, all education measures are provincial and health issues are provincial. Those are issues that affect people on a day-to-day basis where they are in contact with their government, where they need help from elected representatives.

Mr Sergio: We haven't got too much time to go into too many questions in detail, but I want to take you to

the conclusion of your presentation, where you were saying that this would "further centralize power in cabinet and undermine the effectiveness of the Legislature." With this centralization of power, concentrated perhaps in the Premier's office and the inner cabinet, can you expand briefly how this would impact on the efficiency of the Legislature itself and the individual members too?

Dr White: As I attempted to explain in the presentation, I'm not sure I would say it would concentrate power in the Premier's office. It would simply, as a whole, give cabinet more numbers relative to the government backbench and to the Legislature as a whole, simply give cabinet an easier ride in that numbers game, but also because the government backbench and the opposition members would be too thinly spread to ask the questions, to do the research, to spend the time that's required to hold them to account.

Mr Sergio: Then you would have a very powerful central cabinet, let's say, that would overpower the actions of the individual members.

Dr White: Our system is built on a strong cabinet and I accept that; I have no problem with a strong cabinet. However, to me, at some point there are limits and one of those limits is a strong Legislature. I suggest this would undermine the Legislature.

Mr Martin: I appreciate your presentation this afternoon. You hit on some very important points and I'm glad you made them. I would not want to sit here and argue, to be frank with you, "We do more work than them," in terms of federal-provincial. We all do a lot of work if we're committed to the job, and the more manageable the group of people and the area we have to deal with, the better we do that job, as far as I'm concerned. Certainly you make that point more eloquently than I would.

The other is the point you make about the job that we do as private members here in challenging the government on various things, no matter what side of the House you're on. As a backbencher in government, I found there was always more than enough stuff to get my head into and around. For example, in preparation for this particular piece of work I'm into two books that you've written, because I find that this work here is of some great import re the evolution of democracy in Ontario.

I was just wondering, given that you have done some research and the fact that we're not going the usual route here — normally there's a commission set up that is at arm's length, objective. That's how the federal government arrived at its new boundaries. We're not doing that in Ontario. Is that an anomaly? Has that happened before? What's the pattern in the jurisdictions you've studied?

Dr White: I'm not sure there is a pattern. I'm certainly not aware of any jurisdiction that's reverted to federal boundaries. Most of them probably couldn't do that because there are so few federal seats within their boundaries. It's really only feasible in large provinces like Ontario and Quebec. In my view, the issue isn't really, and the burden of my presentation wasn't so much, the process as the outcome. Quite simply, in my view, a smaller Legislature makes for a less democratic government, and it doesn't matter how you get to those

specific boundaries. The bottom line for me is that there is a critical mass of MPPs you need to make this place effective. If you reduce that number significantly, as this bill proposes, you will undermine the democratic process.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor. We appreciate your input and we apologize for cutting you a little short.

Dr White: I used to work in this building, Mr Chairman; I understand.

1650

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

The Chair: Mr Vandezande, who was our fifth presenter, has asked, because of a family emergency, to get on early. We can let you come forward now, sir. We have to leave to go back in the House in about 10 minutes. You could take those 10 minutes and then we could come back and give you your other six minutes, or you can stop at the end of 10. Which is your pleasure?

Mr Gerald Vandezande: I'll probably need 10, but we'll see.

The Chair: Okay. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Vandezande: Mr Chair, members of the committee, I guess what happened yesterday, when I was supposed to appear before the committee dealing with referenda, and what's happening today in some way points to the increasing undermining of democracy. When major policy initiatives and pieces of legislation come before the House and this committee, people who want to participate increasingly are squeezed out of the process. Yesterday we couldn't appear; today our time is reduced. I register that not as a critique but as a reality.

In principle, although I haven't seen the comments by the previous speaker, I virtually adopt them in their entirety. As Citizens for Public Justice, we have often dealt with the whole question federally and provincially, with the importance of democratic participation by voters, not only during elections, but also between elections.

When you look at the package that's before this committee and before the committee that deals with referenda, and you take those two initiatives combined, you have a further undermining of democracy. Bill 81 in no way guarantees increased accessibility, nor does it guarantee increased accountability. In fact it will probably cost more, both financially and politically. Politically, which is most important, people have increasingly the feeling that Queen's Park and all that goes on here is far removed from them. That was a very concrete experience with Bill 26, when I appeared and finally managed to squeeze out of the committee a copy of the bill which at that time the committee at first refused to give to citizens.

Why I'm highlighting this is that when a government gets into power with 45%, or the previous one with nearly 38%, it thinks it can do as it likes. They think that once they've won an election, no matter how, they can act arbitrarily. We need some checks and balances with respect to the democratic process.

The Legislature, in our view, is the chamber that represents citizens in the making of laws and policies. Therefore, we argue that electoral reform of the Legislature ought to be undertaken if the parliamentary system is to be more responsive in its representation of Ontario's diversity. In our view, electoral reform must be guided by

three principles, namely, effectiveness, fairness and equity in representation of all the voters of Ontario.

That's why we would argue that this committee seriously consider, together with the committee that is looking at referenda, the need for proportional representation, so that we get rid of the inequities that currently govern the system and allow governments, once they gain a majority of seats, to ignore the majority of the voters, who didn't vote for them, and nevertheless the government of the day proceeds as it wishes.

In our view, citizens should get what they vote for. If someone votes PC or NDP or Liberal, that vote should go to that party. As well, representation must be equitable, so that in the Legislature representation must be in accordance with the actual support garnered on election day.

Third, it must be effective, namely, citizens should expect that the electoral system will enable their representatives to faithfully carry out the agreed-upon principles and election promises to which voters lent their support.

In the previous election 55% of the public voted for parties other than the Conservatives. Their voices do not constitute 55% of the seats in the House. We have an inequitable system that doesn't really allow for proper popular democratic participation in politics. We're suggesting that this bill be tabled, that the referendum material be tabled and that the combined committees look at an alternative. In that way you also do greater justice to the outlying regions. The argument came back to me — and since you will be disappearing into the House I'll now make it — that under proportional representation you don't necessarily guarantee the seats in the north, which is less populated, that the people there will get adequate representation. A party would run an enormous risk of alienating many voters if it didn't have on its slate of candidates qualified spokespersons who were familiar with the people and the people's interests in the north and thus would ignore that whole block of votes. The same goes for Metro or elsewhere.

What we're arguing is that this bill, because it really ends up with a centralization of power, both in the cabinet and the government caucus, ultimately ends up also in an increase in power in the bureaucracy. Therefore, there is less accountability, less accessibility, and the people will even begin to feel more cynical.

Today, and Mr Young was there, we met 75 people representing about 100 different organizations across this province out of the faith community dealing with social problems. These people increasingly feel sceptical, if not cynical, about their ability to access the government. We simply cannot get the kind of appointments and consultation we think are essential on major changes that were not discussed during the previous election, nor were they the mandate of the majority of the people elected to the provincial Legislature. We can't even discuss them, leave alone be a part of the development of policy alternatives. We are totally shut out, totally ignored, and at best we can get 15 minutes before a committee if we can get in. People then say, "We need radical alternatives," and in my view that leads to the Metro Days of Action.

If the government takes seriously only one thing from the Metro Days of Action, it should be to guarantee

greater representation. We need a representative democracy, greater accessibility, greater accountability and greater participation by the people who are directly affected by the policies the government introduces, by the agencies working with the people who are directly affected and by ordinary citizens like myself who have an interest in the overall development of public policy and who want the diversity of values and perspectives to participate in the decision-making process.

We plead with you to look at the possibility of proportional representation and to look at it in the context of a greatly diversified Ontario. We have a variety of faith and value perspectives that have totally different views with respect to major policy initiatives, particularly of this government. Take seriously the definitions of democracy in the various dictionaries plus the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The preamble to the Ontario Human Rights Code speaks very significantly about the government's obligation to enable full and fair participation by all the people of Ontario in the democratic election process but also during the decision-making process between elections.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We've got about a minute and a half left, not really an effective time for any questions. Did you have any further comments you wanted to make? I tried to divide a minute and a half up, but — do you have any additional comments you want to make, sir?

Mr Vandezande: The question I would like this committee and the referendum committee to address is, what recommendations would you as committees make so that the stakeholders, the people directly affected by government policies who currently really don't have adequate access to those who make the major decisions in this province, will be guaranteed genuine participation in the development of policies and possible alternatives, so that the people whose lives are directly affected, whose future hangs in the balance, may participate and perhaps help the government and the opposition find genuine practical alternatives that lead to a more genuine democracy rather than a lessening of democratic participation?

That's a question that you may want to address as a committee, that you may want to address to the Legislature and particularly to the government. Bill 26, which we dealt with at great length, trying to figure it out, had enormous ramifications. Had it not been for a number of us insisting, with the help of the opposition parties, that there be public hearings and that we get access to the proposed amendments to Bill 26 — in fact, we are still in the dark about some of the consequences of Bill 26.

That was unacceptable, intolerable, a violation of democracy, and I don't say that easily. I went through the Second World War, and all of us had buttons on; mine fell off in the hall. You know, Canadian soldiers gave their lives for the freedom of people like myself. I'm eternally grateful, deeply thankful for that liberation, but let's make sure that the freedom that we were given also in this country, my country, our country, is used responsibly so that no majority can engage in the kind of democratism and majoritarianism that ignores the inherent human rights of the minority.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. You're more than welcome, if you want to stay until we come back, another six minutes, so we could ask some questions. It'll be your call. We'll be recessed until the next vote.

The committee recessed from 1702 to 1707.

The Chair: We can start the questions with the Liberals.

Mr Sergio: Some previous presenters have mentioned that the savings we would acquire with the passage of this bill would be very insignificant, very minimal. Would you say then there's nowhere to go after those minimal savings at the cost of diminishing democracy?

Mr Vandezande: I think that's true. If you go with 103 seats you would have to, in any event already with 130 — as it is now, there is inadequate accessibility at the riding level to any MPP because the MPP only has 24 hours a day, most of which he spends here. Second, if you reduce the number and make the riding larger you're going to have to increase, if you want to be true to the principles of democracy, accessibility at the local level. That means more offices. I dare say, and I'm a cost accountant by background, if you did a cost-benefit analysis simply in terms of dollars and cents you would substantially increase your budget as corporations, and I've worked in a multinational. Centralization inevitably means it costs more money, and that's what you're doing here. Centralization of bureaucracy means less accountability, less accessibility and more financial costs.

Mr Martin: I think you make some interesting connections between the work that's going on re the introduction of more and more referenda in the province and the diminishing of the role of this House by way of fewer members and because of all the things you suggest will happen: an enhancing of the executive power and all that. It's interesting. I'm partway through a book here called *A Parliament in Crisis: The Decline of Democracy in New Zealand*. Part of the thesis there is exactly that: The more you give power to the executive council and cabinet, the more you take away from the private member to represent his constituents, the less democracy you have. That's the premise.

Mr Vandezande: I think that's true. The rumour that is circulating in the document I've seen that leads to sharp reduction or the abolition of school boards is going to raise a major crisis in terms of what we mean by democracy.

What we will have, by the government's own admission, is the centralization of decision-making power in the bureaucracy with respect to curriculum and other major matters that I think ought to be decided by those who are providing the teaching and sending their children to the schools. But because local boards will be eliminated in the name of efficiency, we undermine the quality of education, undermine the quality of popular participation, increase the costs of the bureaucracy, cause further centralization, eliminate the diversity for which our province is known; thus you get a uniformity that has never been the intent of a genuine democracy.

In a democracy you invite diverse views to come to the fore and participate on an equal basis in the shaping of decisions. To use the notion of a financial bottom line

to rationalize a reduction in democracy is an idolization of money that no party should ever subscribe to in the name of democracy.

Mr Young: Mr Vandezande, thank you very much for coming. I always appreciate your remarks and consider them very carefully, as do other members of the committee.

I'm looking at some information I have from the Citizens for Public Justice with regard to income tax, looking for new sources of revenue for the federal government. There are some very interesting suggestions here: changing RRSP deductions; tax exemption for lottery winnings; green taxes to help protect our environment. Some are very interesting.

The unions in Ontario have, and I may be wrong, I believe about \$1 billion a year in income that they get from union dues, and they don't pay any taxes on that. I wonder if you have any comments on that.

Mr Vandezande: I happened to be, at one point, a full-time union negotiator and a representative for the Christian Labour Association of Canada. The dues paid by people to have adequate representation in the workplace are a contribution to the social stability of a province, and I don't think they should be subject to taxation.

With respect to the other figures you quoted, those are from a document we'll be discussing with the parliamentary committee dealing with the federal budget tomorrow. Let me just use that, and I don't know whether you intend it. You can't decide the RRSP issue or the casino issue or other issues, talking about taxation of earnings, by way of referendum. You've got to ask, "Which core values do we as a government, do I as a finance minister, employ when I make an assessment of which incomes, which earnings are taxable?" I don't understand why this government or the federal government simply doesn't declare income to be taxable, no matter what kind of income, and then do justice to the needs of people by removing the inequities in the system, which currently favours high-income earners, corporations and others that pay inadequate taxes.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. Unfortunately we've run out of time. I appreciate your being here this afternoon.

Mr Vandezande: I was just going to make the one point about the social assistance reduction.

The Chair: Unfortunately we do have to finish by 6 o'clock, and we have two more presenters, so I must be difficult on the time. I apologize for that. Thank you very much for your input here this afternoon.

BILL GREEN

The Chair: Our next presenter, going back to the beginning of the list now, is Mr Bill Green. Good afternoon, sir. Sorry for the delay. You have 16 minutes. We've had to cut the time down to accommodate the five people within the time frame because of what's gone on in the House this afternoon. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Bill Green: Mr Carroll, I remember you from the tenant committee.

The Chair: Oh, right, yes.

Mr Green: I lost four minutes there and I'm losing five minutes here. Pretty soon I'm going to come in here for free.

The Chair: If things had gone in the House the way they normally do, we would have had ample time, but unfortunately they didn't.

Mr Green: I understand that. Good afternoon. I hope you're all well today. It's been a hell of a day for you, as I understand. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on this proposal. My name is Bill Green. I'm just a citizen. I'm currently recovering from cancer. During this time I volunteer, program and produce at CIUT-FM, the University of Toronto community radio, and I'm on the board of directors of Metro Tenants Legal Services, as well as trying to recover.

I came here today, though, representing no organization, only as a private citizen, a voice deeply troubled by this bill and its implications.

There is an old Polish proverb that says: "Under capitalism, man exploits man. Under socialism, the reverse is true."

When I asked to speak to the committee about this bill, I was given a copy of the Premier's statement and responses to the legislation. In that statement the Premier used the words "cost" or "costly" five times, "spend" three times, "pay" and "taxpayers" twice each, as well as "money," "debt" and "savings." Not once did I see the word "democracy" or the words "elected members." Not once did the Premier tell the people that democracy, the people's right to representation, was being dismantled.

It is indeed a sad and frightening situation when a government proposes to tear down the people's expression of democracy because it's not cost-efficient in their minds. In other words, democracy costs too much money.

I remember watching film footage of the old US Senate hearings into communism, the old "red menace" hearings of the 1950s, when finally a senator had to ask Joe McCarthy if he had no shame and how low he would sink. We could use that senator right now. Reinhold Niebuhr once said that man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but his inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

The halls of this building are festooned with pictures of those individuals who made this province a great place to live, but not one of them ever made it a cause to deprive the citizenry of this province of the right to representation.

Down the street from here and in just about every town in Ontario is a cenotaph dedicated to those who died protecting democracy. This bill shames that sacrifice. Do you say to them now, "Sorry, democracy may have been noble then, but now it's just too expensive"? Abraham Lincoln said that those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves. Bureaucracy may need a shakeup, downsizing, but not democracy.

Where I live, there are many new Canadians, and when I ask them why they came here, almost all of them say for a better life. When I ask further why they come, it's because they have a chance at freedom, justice and tolerance, and again they say a better life. When I ask, "By better life, do you mean more money?" I usually get educated by being told they want a better life, not a

better lifestyle. Usually then they tell you the horrid stories of the loss of democracy, the rise of tyranny and corruption in their birth homes. Then they finally tell of the loss of hope and the resulting emigration from their homes. The loss of hope — we hear a lot of that lately.

This government's obsession with the deficit, taxes and money has clouded their vision and sense of democracy and justice. They have become fiscal junkies who only see debt reduction, free market economy, profits, money, power. Money to them is freedom, and like drug addicts, they have to have it. They don't know anything else, it seems, and are incapable of learning because of that addiction. They would sell their children's democratic legacy in the name of fiscal responsibility.

Plato said that we can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

When I took business in school, I was told that the object of business was to provide goods and services at a profit. Profit, though, is defined in the dictionary as gain. Gains come in many forms and descriptions, and they are not just monetary. Somerset Maugham said it himself: "If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that too." When you profit morally, you gain wisdom. When democracy gains, it enlightens and empowers the citizenry to build and maintain a just and equal society.

Canada has been described as a country of people who got together and decided to have a country. Within walking distance from this very building there's a Russian restaurant, a Nicaraguan bookstore, a Romanian market and a Haitian art gallery, and the list goes on. We're very blessed to be able to share in this cultural potluck with our many friends. But remember, these people came from Stalin's Russia, Somoza's Nicaragua, Duvalier's Haiti, countries where freedom and justice became commodities and not human rights, where despots and tyrants victimized the people both militarily and economically and the voices of opposition were stifled and brutalized.

When you tell these people now how the government wants to reduce the numbers of democratically elected representatives, they sadly shake their heads and say, "Bill, that's how it started in the country of my birth, and that's how it all fell apart." Power in the hands of the few is the first step to autocracy and misery. It has been said that tyranny of the economy is as deadly as tyranny of the gun. History has shown us that so-called great societies died because people were first deprived of their freedom of choice.

I read recently where these cuts would benefit the current government by eliminating opposition representation in Toronto and the north. Respectfully, I would remind all of the folks that you were elected in many cases by only 50% of the 40% who actually voted, and some of you with even less. I believe it is your moral and ethical obligation to serve those who didn't vote for you or didn't vote at all as equally as you do those who did vote for you.

I'm going to end this very shortly because I would rather you go to the people and ask them what they want instead of going out and telling them what they need.

If democratically elected officials are the pillars of society, then lessening their numbers only weakens the foundation of that civilization. You have a chance, like Spike Lee said, to do the right thing. Walk away from this bill. It would show the people that you have the strength of character to defy those who demean democracy for fiscal reasons.

Fix the bureaucracy of government, but leave the democracy alone. If you truly are building for the future and our children's future, remember what Oscar Wilde said: "Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them."

Thank you. Questions?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Green. We've got about two minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the NDP.

1720

Mr Martin: I just want to thank you for an excellent presentation. Certainly there's no doubt after a presentation like that of the importance of what we're doing here and the fact that we over here feel we're talking about the fundamental right of citizens to representation in the House where laws are made that govern them and all of that, and that we shouldn't be doing this. The bill comes in. Three weeks later, after a bit of consultation, mind you, through negotiation and push and shove at the House leader level, we get I think five days of public consultation.

We've been asked twice now by presenters if the government wouldn't consider tabling this legislation plus the legislation on referenda. I don't think that's going to happen, but there is another option, and that's the option of going to a commission, which is the traditional way of doing this kind of business. I don't think there's anybody who disagrees that from time to time you need to look at and assess whether you are being served well by the representative process that's in place.

Would you concede to the need for at least a commission? Would that answer your concern about the diminishing of democracy?

Mr Green: Diminishing of democracy to me has to do with numbers. As the province grows, I think you need the representatives, because you need to have someone there to hear the voices. If you're going to take 27 or 29 or 30 MPPs out of this House, you've got 30 less vehicles for people to speak to, whether they're on that side or this side.

I'm not a socialist, folks, but then again I'm not a capitalist. When I sit there and I look at the Conservatives on that side and I say they went to law school, many of them, and other parts of school, I say they can't believe, and I guess I'm too much of an idealist, that taking democracy away from the people is a good thing.

Mr Martin: That's a good point.

Mr Young: I've known a lot of veterans, my father was a veteran, and I really, really disagree with your analysis and your conclusion that they would say this is anti-democratic. The freedoms that the veterans fought for in this country are far more substantial than the actual number of seats in the provincial Legislature.

What I'm sure they would agree with is that with the government \$100 billion in debt, being increased by only \$8 billion this year, but in the previous government \$10 billion a year, they would insist that we deal with that, and this is one of the ways we're dealing with it. We're showing leadership.

You made a comment that we should ask the people what they think, and I want to tell you, we did that. We did it on June 8. We published the document. You should get a copy of it, because we're implementing all of it.

Mr Green: I've got one.

Mr Young: It's called the Common Sense Revolution. This was a very clear part of the document; it's a clear part of our mandate. With 130 seats, not 103, we won a clear majority, which is 82 seats. It sounds to me like you're saying that if we doubled the number of politicians, our government would be twice as good, which does not follow.

I want to defer to my colleague Mr Gilchrist to comment.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Young. I guess I would just follow up with some statistics you may not be aware of, Mr Green. Reductions have happened before. In 1935, faced with the overwhelmingly dire circumstances that the province faced at the time, there was exactly the same 20% reduction in the number of members. I haven't heard any part of your evidence that there is any factual evidence to show there was a reduction in democracy in Ontario arising from that.

Like Mr Young, I take exception to the premise that it may be the quality, not quantity, of members who serve in this House that should be the issue. I think it is somewhat repugnant to members of all parties to suggest that the small redistribution that's in effect here for most ridings in terms of the geographical areas and the leveling out of population to remedy the fact that there is a 525% variance from the smallest to the largest riding today, that one citizen in the riding of Rainy River has 6.25 times the voting power of a resident of York Centre — we're remedying that grave injustice, that very undemocratic situation, and that's the intent of this bill.

Mr Sergio: I have thoroughly enjoyed —

Mr Green: Is this questions or statements?

Mr Sergio: Yes, I guess you were waiting for the question. It wasn't there.

Mr Martin: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I just inquire, because we're going to be together for a while, whether this exercise is about deputants coming and making a presentation and then questions of them for clarification, or are we going to hear a stream of speeches?

Mr Gilchrist: Let's save the soapbox, shall we?

Mr Martin: Mr Grandmaître was cut off this morning.

The Chair: Basically, the people can use the time any way they see fit.

Mr Sergio: Mr Green, I have thoroughly enjoyed your presentation and I'd like to have a copy of that if possible.

This morning we had Mr John Sewell, who I'm sure you're familiar with. He did say that we need some changes, but he does not agree with the changes proposed by this particular bill. He said to the committee that

people are totally confused at the levels of government — federal, provincial, Metro, local, school boards — and this does not dwell well in servicing the people of Ontario. I wonder, if this comes from a former mayor, from someone who is well familiar with the intricacies of government and servicing the people, how a larger constituency and reduced representation would serve better those constituents. Any idea?

Mr Green: That's a pretty wide question. Part of your question has to do with all those different forums. I think there's far too much bureaucracy. You can make the law, but whoever carries it out, there's too much of that. I agree with that in many respects. I think the people must have the opportunity to voice their opinions, voice their thoughts and have their input into how their country or how their province is run. I have no problem with that whatsoever. How it's costed, how it's worked on, is a whole different story.

What bothers me more than anything else with this thing is this sort of: "Hey, there are too many. It doesn't work. Let's change it." Boom, like that, it's gone, it's over.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Green. We do appreciate your input here today.

ROBERT MacDERMID

The Chair: Our next presenter is Dr Bob MacDermid from York University. Good afternoon, sir. Welcome to our committee. We're going to be able to squeeze you in before we have to leave, I think, to go vote in the House.

Dr Robert MacDermid: Thank you very much for at least the limited time I'll get to speak. I want to very quickly thank you for inviting me and giving me this short time. I want to cover about four points, some of which have been covered by other participants. I'll spare you the reiteration of those points except to mention them, and then cover a couple that I have not heard mentioned since I have been here.

The points I want to talk about are, first, how Bill 81 in its reduction of representation is unprecedented — and I'm cognizant of the comments of Mr Gilchrist a moment ago — in Canadian electoral history, either at the federal or I think at the provincial level, and certainly since the war.

Second, I'd like to talk about what the reduction in representation means for ordinary citizens and for you honourable members, because I think perhaps you had not considered what kind of a workload you're taking upon yourselves in doing this.

Third, I'd like to just briefly talk about what effect devolving the right to define constituencies to the federal government might have to the citizens of Ontario. I'm not sure whether you've reflected upon that.

Finally, I just want to talk briefly about representation and how crucial it is to democracy and how we must always be aware when we make changes to representation what the ramifications for democracy as a whole might be.

Let me start with Bill 81. In the brief time I've had to prepare for this hearing, I've come to realize that what Bill 81 proposes is completely unprecedented in Canadian democracy. The occasions on which the number of

representatives at either the federal or provincial levels of government has declined can probably be counted on two hands. In most instances, the decline in members was less than 10% and occurred as a result of population shifts from one province to another. Bill 81 is proposing a decline of 27 seats, probably the largest absolute decline in Canadian history. It is almost the only occasion on which representation at either federal or provincial levels has declined, as I mentioned, since 1945.

1730

Every province, on every other occasion of redistribution, has seen fit to increase representation as population increases. Even PEI has increased the size of its Legislature to 32 members, a level of representation unheard of in Ontario, now or in the foreseeable future. Given more time to research the question, I suspect that the abrupt decline in representation that's proposed in this bill is unparalleled in the history of western democracies.

The bill proposes to reduce the number of representatives by 21% and to increase the average number of electors per constituency by 35%. If we extrapolate the annual growth rate of the electorate between 1971 and 1995 to the year 2000 and we divide by 103 seats, it means that on average every MPP will have 35% more constituents to represent than is currently the case.

The average constituency size will grow from about 50,000 to, according to my calculation, 69,300, and that's the average. Of course there will be some levelling out, as the member indicated before, through this kind of redistribution, but inequalities will still exist. You're not proposing to make northern Ontario entirely one constituency, I take it. There will always have to be some constituencies that have lower numbers of electors than other constituencies. So that's an average. I expect the constituency which York University is in, North York, which is the largest constituency in the federal House, will somehow hopefully be levelled down, but I suspect it will still remain as one of the largest.

That average of 69,300 is the largest average constituency size in all of Canadian provincial politics. No other jurisdiction in Canada thinks so little of the function of representation that it would choose to create constituencies of that size. It's only matched by the lack of power that Ontario voters have in federal elections. We all know that Ontario voters are underrepresented in federal elections.

What does that mean, though, for the ordinary citizen and for you honourable members, who may have not thought through exactly what this means for you? Perhaps it's necessary to go through some simple calculations to understand how the provisions of this bill narrow considerably the possibilities of democratic participation for citizens.

Suppose a constituency office is open 250 days a year. I know that's not true because I've had some involvement with a constituency office. I imagine it's more in the order of 200 days a year. Suppose a constituent wishes to contact an MPP's office once every two years. That's a fairly limited amount of contact. Surely we'd all agree that we must have a democratic infrastructure that is capable of handling participation by one citizen every two years. In a four-year period, if we go through the mathe-

matics, that would mean 138,600 calls to a constituency office. Divide that number by 1,000 working days in a four-year cycle and you get 139 calls a day. That's of course a low estimate. It would in fact be much higher.

I know that no representative or representative's staff could possibly handle that level of contacts. I know from experience that the average MPP has in their constituency office two and a half or three staff members, and even with the current volume of contacts, they are simply incapable of handling and responding to citizens' requests for information, citizens' requests for assistance with different government proposals. What this expansion of the size of every constituency means is that if we do not put more money into the average MPP's budget to be able to respond to these requests, we're really diminishing the likelihood that citizens will ever bother even to try to contact an MPP, because that busy signal or that voice mail response will be the only one they are likely to get.

Let me then move to the third point I want to make, and that is ceding the rights — if not in law ceding the rights, at least in practice ceding the rights — to determine electoral boundaries to the federal government.

It is true that I think the most apparent trend in Canadian federalism over the past 25 years has been the downloading of service delivery from the federal to the provincial governments. I heard what Mr Maves had to say, that the federal government still continues to offer a number of important services which citizens have a right to have representation on. However, in the main, shared-cost programs and conditional grants where the province produces and delivers the service has meant that the provincial government has grown in importance, in many instances with respect to the policies that most affect citizens' lives: education, health, welfare. It is the provincial government that plays the prime role.

The growing importance of provincial governments is reflected in the universally higher number of representatives to provincial governments. That's true in every province. People are more likely to need to contact a provincial MPP than a federal MP.

The other part of moving to federal boundaries is that adopting federal election boundaries denies the importance of provincial government programs. Moreover, it ties an Ontario citizen's level of representation in Queen's Park to the rules that apply to the distribution of seats at the federal level. I'm sure members are all aware that the number of seats Ontario currently has at the federal level, the 103 seats that you're proposing to diminish to, seriously underrepresents its population in Ottawa furthermore because of constitutional guarantees made to different provinces at and since Confederation.

I wonder if Ontario citizens will be surprised to hear that the extent of their representation at Queen's Park will now depend upon the size of Quebec's representation in Ottawa. In other words, what you're doing is saying that citizens' representation here will now be tied to guarantees under federal representation that Quebec have a certain number of MPs in Ottawa. That is what you are doing when you pass this bill.

Let me turn finally to representation as what I consider to be the fundamental, the very essence indeed, of

democracy. It's the basis for all governing decisions, and in fact the history of the growth of Canadian democracy is the history of the extension and expansion to different groups in society who were excluded from basic rights of citizenship. It's a history that we should be both proud of and ashamed of. We speak of it as the history of the extension of voting rights first to the propertyless, then to women and then to native Canadians, but in fact it is the history of the granting of rights for representation to groups of individuals who we once thought, or our ancestors once thought, had no right to have their opinions heard, indeed who had no opinions worthy of consideration.

I remind you of this little bit of history because its significance lies not in the granting of the right to vote, but in the possibility of voting for someone who represents your interests. In other words, the history of Canadian democracy is then the history of the extension of representation, grudgingly and bit by bit, to more and more people.

How does this feed into the size of a constituency or what difference does the number of electors make to the quality of the democracy we experience here in Ontario? Some are obviously prepared to believe that it makes no difference and that increasing the geographical area and population of a representative's constituency makes no difference whatsoever; that increasing the number of electors by as much as one third will have no effect on the quality of representation. We'll simply elect better members.

That belief rests upon a very impoverished idea of representation, a belief that assumes that the only interest and responsibility of a citizen is to vote every four or five years and stay out of government in between those events. It is a belief that implicitly pushes citizens away from taking part in government and from making their views known to representatives. The logic implicit in this belief is quite simple: Since citizens don't take part to any great extent and often have little to contribute, nothing is lost by reducing their opportunities to do so. Decreasing the number of representatives cannot really affect the quality of democracy and will give to citizens the tax savings that they want and value above anything so vague and general as representation. The argument is flawed, I think, in an important way. It supposes that apathy is centred in individuals, is a function of individual makeup and not of the system of representation.

It is not that people do not wish to take part in government, but they are rarely given the opportunity or encouragement to do so. A representative that does not encourage and expand participation will in the end fail to represent. That is because the real essence of representation is dialogue. For views to be represented, they need to be made known. A representative needs to constantly consult with constituents, to constantly offer opportunities to discuss with them the issues of the day, to hear their opinions and to decide how they best can be represented. I'm sure, as representatives, you all know these things to be true.

The larger the group being represented, the more impossible the act of representation becomes, the more demobilized and depoliticized voters become and the

more superficial becomes the job of representative, who now is limited to being a representative of his or her party, of his or her government, who is limited then to handing out 50th wedding anniversary certificates and other events that have no representational meaning and few opportunities for meaningful political dialogue. It is the very kind of pseudo-representation that will grow as the size of constituency grows, where representatives do not seek our opinions, do not try to engage us in dialogue that discovers our opinions and our arguments, but rather seeks to represent the opinions of government or party to us and display for us the power and prestige of office.

The more people to be represented, the greater will be the tendency towards this kind of pseudo-representation and the fewer opportunities we will have to participate in our own self-government.

The Chair: Just to let you know, Dr MacDermid, we're down to the last two minutes.

Dr MacDermid: Okay. In closing, I urge the committee to consider wisely this bill's proposal to reduce representation so dramatically that it cannot help but affect the quality of democratic experience that all Ontarians will have in the future. No imperceptibly small reduction in expenditures could possibly justify diminishing the quality of our democratic freedoms.

The Chair: With just a minute and a half left, we don't have any effective time for questioning. Did you have any final comments you wanted to make?

Dr MacDermid: I think I probably said all I need to say.

The Chair: Thanks very much, and we apologize for cutting it short, but the indications of the day made us do that. We will now recess until after the vote.

The committee recessed from 1743 to 1750.

CHRIS CLIMO

The Chair: Mr Climo, we have a small window of opportunity for you to make your presentation to us. We'll allot you the 16 minutes we've had to cut the times down to this afternoon. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Chris Climo: I won't take 16 minutes. I believe I have more like about six minutes, but those were all the thoughts I have, and I believe in efficiency, so I shall give them to you.

Members of the committee, my name is Chris Climo and I'm from the city of Etobicoke. I'd like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you today on the Fewer Politicians Act. I believe the committee hearing system is an important part of our democratic process, since it allows citizens of Ontario to address their views on specific subjects directly to the elected representatives.

Our parliamentary system is built on representative democracy, which conveys the power to members of the Legislature to make decisions on behalf of their fellow citizens between elections. I'd like to state that I recognize and respect the mandate that the electorate has given you as MPPs. However, I believe it is important that citizens have an avenue to express their views between elections. This hearing process provides that avenue. It is the responsibility of citizens to avail themselves of that opportunity. For the record, I'd like to state my belief that expressing your views calmly and legally

using this avenue is much more effective and morally defensible than expressing your views by shouting, marching and protesting on public avenues.

This is the first time I've ever appeared before a committee to address proposed legislation. However, I believe that the Fewer Politicians Act is an important step in the process of redefining government to reflect the realities of the 1990s.

I'm a chartered accountant by profession and I work for TD Securities. Those of us who were employed in the private sector through the late 1980s and the 1990s have seen downsizing of almost all businesses to reflect the new realities. Scant few businesses have escaped the efficiency drives, the cost controls, the hiring freezes and ultimately the cost cutting. The key to success is to deliver satisfactory goods and services to your customers in the most efficient manner. This is accomplished through a variety of factors, including technology improvements, but an essential component remains the reduction in staff levels. This means fewer people working both harder and smarter to deliver the same level of service.

I believe the group whose jobs have been most affected by these changes are the middle management levels, a group that I number myself among. These people are working 60- to 70-hour weeks, including time on evenings and weekends, with little or no additional compensation. Their lives have been dramatically changed in the past 10 years.

By contrast, the government of Ontario had not previously faced up to the realities of the late 1980s and the 1990s. The government continued to grow, to increase spending, to increase staff levels and ultimately to increase both taxes and deficits. The government essentially denied the laws of economics through their unlimited taxation power and their massive borrowing abilities. The government was not sharing the burden with the citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, the very people they are supposed to represent.

In June 1990 the citizens and taxpayers sent the government a wake-up call. Welcome to the reality of the 1990s, ladies and gentlemen. To date the new government has demonstrated they've heard that message. They've been striving to reduce the size of government, the bureaucracy of government and ultimately the cost of government. The Fewer Politicians Act is an important symbol of that commitment by the Legislature. For starters, I've heard estimates that the reduction from 130 to 103 MPPs will save \$10 to \$11 million a year. That alone is a very compelling reason.

I also believe that the realignment of the ridings to the federal guidelines will result in savings of election administration, and it is my belief that it will reduce confusion among the public of who their members are and should increase cooperation between MPs and MPPs since they will cover the exact same territory and serve the same constituents. The present system overlaps varying constituencies and, I believe, confuses the members of the public as to who their members are and makes it difficult for the two levels of government to cooperate due to the overlap of their various ridings. This coordination between the two levels of government will,

I believe, improve the level of service to constituents and not decrease it as other people have stated.

It has been said that MPPs will not be able to properly service a riding the same size as a federal riding. I dismiss that argument completely. Most federal MPs manage to serve their constituents, to deal with a large variety of issues while spending probably more time travelling back and forth between Ottawa and their ridings than most MPPs due to the increased distances. It is my belief that any MPPs who feel they cannot work as hard or as efficiently as MPs on behalf of their constituents should look for another line of work.

This act demonstrates that you, as MPPs, are committed to more efficient government, to spending the taxpayers' money more wisely and to working harder and smarter to deliver the same level of service. It also demonstrates that your commitment begins at the top and that you are personally prepared to share the same burdens as your constituents and face the same realities. In my opinion, you owe them nothing less.

Mr Sergio: You're an accountant, right?

Mr Climo: Yes, sir.

Mr Sergio: Of course, to make a representation to our committee today you did a little bit of research, I would say. Do you really see some \$10-million, \$11-million, \$12-million saving by this restructuring?

Mr Climo: Based on the preliminary numbers I've seen, that is the estimated saving. I am not opining as to whether that is in fact a saving. If you'd like to provide me with the books and the information I'd be prepared to do so. That is based on the reports I've seen.

Mr Sergio: I want you to know that we ourselves haven't seen any figures yet.

Another question: You have stressed the fact of, "Let's wake up to the realities of the 1990s." What does this mean to the realities of the democratic process? Can you expand on that, please?

Mr Climo: It is my belief that 103 hardworking members of the provincial Parliament should be able to represent the people in Ontario. As I said, it's simply a part of things that everybody had done. It's a matter of working harder, it's a matter of working smarter. Many people in all sorts of businesses are doing jobs that used to be done by two people, are working overtime, are working hard, and I don't deny that as MPPs you'll likely work hard. I think that's the reality.

Mr Sergio: Like they say, you've got to do more for less, right?

Mr Climo: Everybody else has had to up to this point, and I believe the government should have to as well.

Mr Martin: I want you to know that I appreciate your coming today and making your presentation. I think it's important that we hear from people like yourself and I think what you have to say is very important as well.

My only question to you is, given that this piece of work the government is on to now is quite important, has some rather far-reaching ramifications, it's quite significant — dropping from 130 members to 103 members is a real incursion into the fundamentals of representative democracy — do you think it's appropriate that we do this in two months, with six days of hearings, 16 minutes per person, 20 minutes when we get back on track, when traditionally we've done this kind of thing — I don't

suggest for a second that we shouldn't visit this issue and from time to time make changes to reflect the reality of a particular day. But doing it in two months as opposed to going out to an objective arm's-length commission, which is the normal way, which the federal government did to arrive at their numbers, does that make any sense to you?

Mr Climo: I have a couple of comments on that. First, as I said in my statement, it's certainly important to get representation from the public, and I think this process is doing that. With due respect, maybe people who are taking 16 minutes haven't organized their thoughts and you could hear a lot more people if they'd do it in six or eight. I sat down with what I thought were the key things and presented those to you and didn't come up with 15 minutes worth of other things. So I think members of the public could present in less time and you'd get more input.

I also think, though, that if the idea is right, there needs to be debate, but there's no point in debating an idea that is the right idea. Also, I would say again that in the world of business, which I call the world of reality, you have to move quickly. You don't have the luxury of saying, "Let's give this two months, four months, six months, eight months, 10 months; let's study it." I think governments need to realize they don't have the luxury of doing that either. They need to debate the ideas, hear the relevant points and make a decision.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): Thank you, Mr Climo, for your presentation. I have to agree with a lot of the points you made. I think the boundary that runs corresponding with the MPs certainly does take away a lot of confusion for the people we represent, certainly the technology part of it too. I have a rather large rural riding. We've adapted ourselves so that we can serve it well with the 1-800 lines, computers, even conference calls if it's a group situation. I think we address those and that we have progressed since the last time the boundaries were adjusted.

Another thing was brought up this morning or earlier today, and I'd just like your comment on it. It was suggested by one of the presenters that we have a four-day week here sitting in the Legislature. If it was reduced to three and perhaps we extended the hours, it would allow us another day back in our riding, regardless of whether it's rural or urban. I just wonder what your comment would be on that. We could serve our constituency even better as far as spending more time and providing the service is concerned, which is what we're all trying to do.

1800

Mr Climo: That certainly sounds like a viable idea. As MPPs, you have two roles, one of which is to be here in the Legislature, and that's certainly important, but you have a role in serving your constituents which is probably of equal or greater importance. If that meant longer days in the Legislature in the three days that you're here and more time in your riding to serve constituents, that might make up for the fact that the ridings may be a little larger. Certainly I think that would make some sense. You need to say, "How much work needs to be done and how much time do I have to do it?" and whatever schedule needs to be set to fit it in, you do it.

As I indicated to this gentleman, in the world of business and reality, you don't have the luxury of saying, "Let's schedule another five days or six days or eight days," because the time has passed. You know when the deadline is, you know what has to be done and you have to make your schedule work accordingly. Maybe three days here and two days out would be the best way to do it.

The Chair: Mr Maves, a quick minute.

Mr Maves: Just on whether we should have more time to look at this, as Mr Martin had said, I'd like to point out that this has been in the Common Sense Revolution since 1994, so the idea has been out there for over two years now.

Also, the members opposite have said they want to have MPPs appear in the public hearings. I'm against that. I think public hearings should be for people from the public and not other MPPs. They have their chance in the House. How do you feel about that?

Mr Climo: I agree with you. As I said, I've never appeared before a committee before, but I think this is important. All the members were elected to represent their constituents and make those decisions in the House, and that's the place to do it. There was a concern that there wasn't enough hearing from the public with the restricted amount of committee time. If you put more MPPs in this chair rather than regular citizens, you'd hear from even fewer members of the public. I'd say even one MPP in this chair is too many.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Climo. We do appreciate your coming forward today and giving us your input.

Mr Climo: Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Gilchrist: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I seek your indulgence and I ask your forgiveness if the habit that I have become accustomed to on another committee is not the practice of this one. I don't say that in the slightest way to say that one is better than the other.

In looking at the number of gaps we had today and knowing that other names have been sent in, I guess when I agreed, and certainly when I voted in here, that the selection would be in rotation, it was my expectation that when any one list runs out, you don't stop the selection and the slotting. For instance, if the government were to only send in six names but each of the opposition sent in nine, when you hit the sixth government member, you then go Liberal, NDP, Liberal, NDP, Liberal, NDP. I'm curious to know whether some other strategy is used in this committee, because I see we have a number of gaps again in London and Ottawa. I'm just curious to know whether every name has been accommodated that has met the deadline.

The Chair: Have we accommodated all the names in London and Ottawa? I guess that's the first question.

Clerk of the Committee: As I discussed with you, the people who are on A, B and C, the caucus lists, if the lists were beyond the numbers that were available, I haven't been instructed by anyone to continue to schedule any that are left over. From this morning's instructions, what I have followed is, anyone who calls in to my office requesting an appointment in either Ottawa or London is being scheduled in any of those spots, regardless of any affiliation.

Mr Gilchrist: Okay, that clarifies for those two. I just want to put on the record that when we agreed to schedule in rotation from the lists, I did not see anything limiting that to an equal number from each list. I absolutely accept, if the clerk believes that those who were the excess, if I can call them that, have now been told how to remedy that, that's fine. We'll leave it up to them to do it. But I would like if at all possible for the northern ones that the strategy is, anybody who meets the test of meeting the deadline gets scheduled. After the equal distribution — on the Employment Standards Act, one particular opposition party had five times the number of names, and we assimilated it simply by going one government, five opposed, and that sort of thing. In other cases, we've been able to go pro, con, pro, con, but I think it really is important that the most fundamental principle is anybody who meets the deadline should be allowed the opportunity to speak.

The Chair: We've never run into a situation where we didn't have enough people who wanted to address the committee, so it's a little bit of a unique situation. I would assume —

Mr Sergio: Mr Chair, on a point of order: The members are leaving. There are two important items to be discussed yet.

The Chair: We cannot discuss those two important items, because there's nobody here from the third party. We'll have to discuss them in Ottawa tomorrow.

Mr Gilchrist: We have a break tomorrow morning in Ottawa, a gap.

The Chair: We'll have to discuss them during one of the breaks tomorrow morning. It's not fair to discuss them in the absence of one of the caucuses.

My understanding was that the instructions we gave the clerk were the spots to be left vacant would be filled up with people from the D list if there was an excess there. The clerk's interpretation and the one that I thought was the interpretation too was, if a spot was assigned to the Liberals, then it would either be a Liberal-designated person who would go in there or somebody from the phone-in list, not somebody from one of the other two caucus lists.

Mr Sergio: In that particular scenario, are you saying if the spot is empty and Mr Miclash is available and he wants to come, then he would be allowed to make a presentation?

The Chair: That's the issue we've got to talk about tomorrow in Ottawa. This is a little different issue. We can talk about that again tomorrow.

Mr Gilchrist: If those people have now been given a different mechanism to get on, I am happy with that. I would hate to think anybody whose name was in by the deadline wasn't accommodated somehow, without caring what list they were on.

Clerk of the Committee: Mr Gilchrist, I am accommodating anyone who phones in to my office and is on the D list as a result of their calling in.

Mr Sergio: Do we have a list for tomorrow?

The Chair: It's been distributed, I believe.

Clerk of the Committee: The rough one has been distributed. There were still a number of changes being made. It was distributed at 3:30. It should be there.

The Chair: We are adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in Ottawa.

The committee adjourned at 1808.



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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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*Mr Ernie	Hardeman (Oxford PC)
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Mr Joseph N.	Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
*Mr Len	Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H.	Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Steve	Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr Tony	Martin (Sault Ste Marie ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr John R.	O'Toole (Durham East / -Est PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Joseph	Spina (Brampton North / -Nord PC) for Mrs Ross (afternoon)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Rosario	Marchese (Fort York ND)
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Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Avrum Fenson, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Friday 8 November 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Vendredi 8 novembre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 réduisant le nombre
de députés



Chair: Jack Carroll
Clerk: Lynn Mellor

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Friday 8 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Vendredi 8 novembre 1996

The committee met at 0915 in the Delta Ottawa Hotel, Ottawa.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

STRATEGIC DEMOGRAPHICS INTERNATIONAL

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning, everyone. I think we will get started. It's great to be here in Ottawa this morning to discuss Bill 81.

Our first presenter this morning, representing Strategic Demographics International, is Krystyna Rudko, the president. Good morning and welcome to our committee. You have 20 minutes. Should you allow some time for questions in that 20 minutes, we would begin the questioning with the Liberals and split the time up evenly. The floor is yours.

Ms Krystyna Rudko: Terrific. Thank you very much, Mr Chair, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen. I will be speaking for about eight or nine minutes and I welcome questions. Also, please feel free to interrupt if you have a question while I'm testifying.

On June 8, 1995, Ontario voters sent a clear message to their political leaders: They wanted change. They wanted a new way of governance in Ontario and they wanted their province back. On June 8, 1995, Ontario voters elected a Progressive Conservative government and gave it a clear mandate to put things right.

The Mike Harris government set out a clear plan of action for Ontario, including the promise to reduce the size and cost of government. They promised to redefine the Ontario Legislature and reduce the number of elected members. To make things simple and cost-effective, they proposed to align the provincial electoral boundaries to the federal ones, reducing the number of MPPs from 130 to 103.

On October 1, 1996, the government introduced Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the

Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts. This plan effectively redraws the electoral and also the demographic map of Ontario. Under this configuration, electoral districts would be significantly bigger, comprising an average population of 97,912 people. With larger populations, demographic makeup becomes vital to understanding the new electoral districts.

Because of its size and importance, Ontario is usually the first to feel the effects of social and economic shifts. Each of these shifts is rooted in demography, and no other province in the country is affected by demographic change to the same degree as Ontario. Within the province, it is individual communities that are the first to feel the effects of the winds of change.

Demographic change is one of the major factors producing the mismatch between our current realities and our current programs and policies. These policies come from different demographic times. Important challenges and opportunities face all Ontarians as we begin to feel the effects of shifting demographic trends, trends that will define the Ontario of the 21st century, its citizens, its institutions and its markets. Only by understanding them can we design our services, products and policies to effectively meet the needs of our citizens. Demographic forces touch people's everyday lives as citizens, as members of the labour force, as consumers of policies, as taxpayers and indeed as voters.

Whether it be population size and growth rate, changes in family and household structures, aging of the population, immigration and ethnic diversity or shifts in labour market participation and economic wellbeing, all are extremely important to the overall interests of Ontario. All of these demographic variables are present in varying degrees in each of the communities which would make up the 103 new electoral districts.

The challenge to government as it reduces its electoral landscape and redraws it is to recognize that social and economic shifts accompany these new geographic boundaries. Demographic redistribution changes the makeup of communities: their age structures, household compositions, ethnic makeup, income averages and poverty levels. Inherent in such a dramatic alteration of demographic characteristics is the potential to miss the shifting social and economic indicators vital to responsible decision-making.

The benefit of Bill 81 is a clearer picture of the unique needs of communities. It informs the policy formulation process and provides a quantitative base for designing programs aimed at assisting certain segments of society. On the administrative side, aligning provincial boundaries

with federal ones reduces the cost of governing and takes advantage of permanent voters' lists currently being contemplated by the federal government, allowing legislators more effective communication with their constituents. Bill 81 places greater emphasis on MPPs and strengthens their role in the political process.

The challenge to communities is to move quickly to embrace new members, to gain an understanding of their circumstances, to recognize evolving priorities and to act to bring the best interests of their communities before their legislative representatives.

The opportunity to citizens can best be defined by the old adage "There is strength in numbers." Reinforced with a substantially higher population base, communities gain a more powerful voice and a greater potential to influence public policy. Realigning provincial boundaries to match federal boundaries removes the confusion that often exists among voters with regard to which riding they live in for which election. Indeed, Bill 81 possesses a serendipitous incentive for greater voter participation. Finally, reducing the size and cost of government is a key part of building an attractive climate for investment and growth in our province. Such a climate creates jobs, reduces the deficit and increases the wellbeing of each and every taxpayer.

Isaac Asimov wrote: "It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be...." Demography studies change. Demography makes change easier to predict, easier to understand and easier to plan for.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We have about four minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the official opposition.

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): Thank you for your presentation. I think all the members sitting around this table agree that we needed a realignment of our districts or ridings, and you're absolutely right, we were told before June 8 that it would happen.

My problem with the present model, if I can call it a model, is that the fact that the federal government is using this model doesn't necessarily mean it's perfect. I'm not going to talk about numbers — 103 or 110 or 120. I would have preferred a model made for Ontario and not a model made or dictated by the federal government.

Now, I want to go to page 2 of your presentation. You say, "Aligning provincial boundaries with federal ones reduces the cost of governing and takes advantage of permanent voters' lists" — and I agree with you — "currently being contemplated by the federal government, allowing legislators more effective communication with their constituents." How can we improve communications when some ridings are increasing their population or their voters' list by 20,000? How can we improve communications when we only have one constituency office to serve 75,000 or 95,000 people?

Ms Rudko: If I may just refer to the statement I made in my speech, what I was referring to is the fact that permanent voters' lists allow members of the Legislative Assembly, MPPs, to have immediately or within very

short periods of time the most up-to-date, accurate lists of people as they move around, whether it be the province or from riding to riding or from outside the country. Basically what this does is allow members the opportunity to make contact immediately with the new constituents who have moved into their ridings, to establish some kind of relationship with them and to make sure that the needs they may have would be addressed in the future.

Mr Grandmaître: How do you do it? That's my question.

Ms Rudko: There are a variety of forms of doing it. It can be done either through personal contact, contact via some kind of newsletter or contact via attending community events, making sure the office is represented at various things that happen around the riding. Not all 97,000 or 98,000 people at any given time require the assistance of their MPP. Therefore, it's a better use of time.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): When you compare other provinces, Ontario will have the least amount of provincial legislation. I don't know whether you'd agree or not, but the nature of the issues that MPPs tend to deal with are more specific to family conditions and individuals' daily lives, so it's not unusual to receive 100 to 140 phone calls in your office in one day.

On a personal basis, I don't mind. In Ottawa Centre, this riding here, there'll be an expansion, an increase of about 18,000 people. That's fine. I would hope we'd have some semblance of the same kind of resources to deal with, because I think communications will be more difficult. The federal MPs have an unlimited amount of resources. MPPs have been cut back and have now a very specific amount of money to deal with communications, which essentially means that MPPs — all parties — don't have the kind of householders they had before. Instead of putting out two or three, now maybe there is one or a little bit of communication to targeted groups. So on the communication front —

The Chair: Mr Patten, unfortunately the question's a little too long.

Mr Patten: All right. Thank you.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): Mrs Rudko, how do you figure that reducing the number of politicians by 27 gives you what the population wants, and that is, in your words, it will give you the province back? How does that give you the province back?

Ms Rudko: It refers to the strength in numbers. As you increase the various electoral districts in terms of numbers, what you do is you put together a larger group of like-minded individuals, and in fact those communities then grow in number. The various interest groups within those communities grow in number and it gives them a stronger voice in terms of the issues they want to present to their legislative representatives.

Mr Marchese: I appreciate the argument. I'm just not sure that simply reducing the number and increasing the population for those members is going to give them more power or you more power actually. The real power is in cabinet and the real power is in the Premier's office. That's really where it has always been, and I'm not sure that by eliminating 27 politicians you're going to have more power back. Effectively you'll elect governments,

and cabinet, through the Premier's office, rules the way things will be governed and the way we will be governed. That is essentially what will happen, so we're going to have a problem here.

You reduce the number of people; services will increase for us. Now it may or may not matter to you, but we in our offices have a hell of a time dealing with people's problems and trying to respond as efficiently as we can, and having people complaining that we're not responding fast enough. This will add to that. You may or may not be aware of that, but that's a reality.

The second reality, particularly in the north, is that some of these ridings are going to be extremely huge, bigger than some countries in Europe or countries in other parts of the world. You may or may not care about that. I'm not sure whether you reflected on that, but it's going to cause some problems, not just in terms of responding to people's ability to deliver quickly on their problems but to get to the various people in that huge constituency in the north. How do you respond to that?

Ms Rudko: If you take a look at the numbers of the federal redistributed electoral boundaries as they will be in effect after January 8, you will notice that for the northern districts the numbers are much lower than they are for metropolitan areas. For example, Algoma — it just happens to be the first one on the list — has a population base of 76,000 people versus Ottawa West or Ottawa Centre, which is upwards of 107,000 or 108,000 people. So Elections Canada did take into consideration the issue of the north and the geography of the north.

0930

Mr Marchese: Well, I don't think it does. I think we've got a big problem. One of the points my colleague made is that the federal politicians have almost unlimited power to distribute flyers in their ridings. We have been cut back by this government in terms of our ability to be able to communicate. For me in my riding it's anywhere up to \$45,000 or \$50,000 that I use to be able to communicate with my constituents in various languages — Chinese, Portuguese in particular and Italian — where there are problems with literacy. They have unlimited powers to distribute to their ridings in terms of communicating at least on that level. We have been severely cut back. We're going to have bigger ridings with limited budgets. Do you worry about that? Yes or no?

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Thank you for your presentation. Certainly the points you make I believe are most important and extremely valid. Yesterday at the hearings — and we'll hear them again today, so I thought I would get it out bright and early this morning — it was said we were interfering with the democratic process by what we're doing. Any thoughts on that? The democratic process being — now I'm trying to put you on the spot — the fact that people won't have, I guess is what they were trying to indicate, as many people to vote for. That's the only way I can see it. But I just wondered whether you felt that what we were doing interfered in any way with what you and I recognize as the democratic process in this province.

Ms Rudko: First of all, I'm a demographer not a political scientist, but if you take a look at it from a

demographic perspective, I don't see any interference whatsoever in the democratic process. On the contrary, I see, to bring it up again, strength in numbers. What this does is arm individual MPPs with a greater resource in terms of their own constituents and the situations and circumstances their constituents find themselves in. It gives them a greater tool to effectively represent these constituencies in the legislative House.

For example, taking a look at single parents or perhaps some kind of problems within families and households, if a group of people form a community group of single parents, suddenly if the riding becomes a lot bigger or the community becomes a lot bigger, that group also has a lot more people within it, again giving them a greater voice in trying to push policies or make their voice heard before the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Stewart: I appreciate that and I think you're bang on the money. We hear so much from the past governments that the backbenchers never get a chance to have anything to say because the government of the particular day has such a large majority, and that's been quite prevalent in the last number of years. To me, with fewer politicians, yes, we've now got the opportunity to represent the constituents and their views much more effectively than if you're with a great many people. So I agree with you.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Mr Marchese has pointed out some challenges that are faced in different ridings. In the north there's the physical space, the ridings tend to be larger; in the south, in the more urban areas, Mr Gilchrist's riding of Scarborough East, for instance, they have nine predominant languages, they have ethnic diversity. He has pointed that out in his own riding. So there are challenges for each riding in each area of the province. I wonder, as a demographer, do you think the north has that type of ethnic diversity?

Ms Rudko: No, in fact Canada is unique in that most of the ethnic diversity — the new immigrants coming to the country settle in the south. They settle in Toronto, in Vancouver, in Montreal, and now to some degree in Ottawa. There's an interesting little comparison I like to use. There are more people of foreign-born heritage living in Ottawa-Hull than in all of eastern Canada, if you remove Montreal from the equation. The same stands true, of course, for Ontario when you take a look at the south versus the rural northern areas. That is always going to be an issue.

Merging some of these communities and redrawing the electoral map makes it easier to communicate with people in various languages, because you're not diffusing those communities into so many, in fact you're bringing them together, and you're allowing the communication — instead of having to do three, as you said, householders by three different members, you can now put it all together into one. So it becomes a much more —

Mr Grandmaitre: Where do you get the budget?

Ms Rudko: I'm not here to discuss the budget issue; I'm here to suggest that it becomes easier and more effective to communicate.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Rudko. We appreciate your presentation this morning.

OTTAWA-CARLETON BOARD OF TRADE

The Chair: Our next presenter is Willy Bagnell, president of the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Trade. I would like to remind the members again that the presenters come to us voluntarily, in their own time, and I believe they would appreciate if we would listen to what they have to say rather than have side conversations going on constantly. Good morning, sir. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mr Willy Bagnell: I would like to welcome you all this morning to Ottawa, the capital of Canada. The board of trade, after very short debate on this issue, actually, the other morning, is very supportive of the legislation to reduce the number of elected officials in Ontario and link them inextricably to the riding situation that has been developed for the federal ridings.

We believe at the outset the worst thing that can happen with this is it will serve to clearly communicate what the ridings and the elected officials do on the same level to the public, thereby lessening the confusion that exists today in Ontario. Quite frankly, a lot of other provinces could take this idea as a leadership move from the Ontario government.

We further believe that this fiscal responsibility that the government is demonstrating today is long overdue. We have talked for many, many years about reducing the number of elected officials across our country to more match the demographics and the geographics of our country, and this is the first step that a major government has taken in a long, long time to do this.

We believe that \$11 million in saving is not something to be sneezed at and is on the way to a balanced budget, which every major chamber of commerce and board of trade in this province has called for our government to do since 1983.

I think the other side of this question is that the people who are out there who are voting in the elections, whether they be provincial or federal, will now be able to understand that everything is basically the same. If the riding ends on Carling Avenue here in Ottawa or starts on Bank Street, it's the same. There's no longer the need to be confused about names of wards or this, that and the other thing; it's the same. This will serve to increase the number of people getting involved in the democratic process and not diminish it because of confusion.

Finally, I believe very much that the cost structures that are involved in reducing these ridings can further be enhanced and further reductions be looked at if we look at the cost of various office budgets, but I'm sure that's a topic the government will look at some time down the road. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We've got about five minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: The focus of your argument is confusion, that this will help a lot of the electorate deal with the confusion they seem to be facing during election periods. Do you really believe that's the big problem people out there have, that they're confused about provincial and federal boundaries and that they've been clamouring for years to simply straighten out those

boundaries so that once and for all they're less confused and they'll be happy therefore? Is that the argument we're making?

Mr Bagnell: You characterize the thrust of this as being the major part of the problem, not me. I put forward three arguments that support this legislation. Confusion is part of the issue. I think it helps to eliminate the confusion and whenever you help to eliminate confusion in the democratic process, you better serve the constituents that you are elected, sir, to represent.

0940

Mr Marchese: The two points I got from your presentation are the confusion part and the saving of \$11 million, which I'm going to get to. Frankly, I don't believe I have ever encountered in my years of politics, as a trustee for eight years and now as an MPP for two terms, where people have really said to me: "Our problem with this whole political process is boundaries. We're confused between provincial and federal." I have never encountered that, so it is new to me that we'd make an argument around this as a way of solving that problem.

On the second point, the \$11 million in saving, do you believe in referendums?

Mr Bagnell: My personal opinions are not what's in question here, sir. I believe in the democratic process as does every chamber of commerce and board of trade in this province.

Mr Marchese: Okay. This government believes in referendums and there is a white paper that speaks to it. We don't know whether they'll pass it or not. If they have referendums on many issues, each referendum will cost \$25 million. They happen to think this is great. I don't happen to think that enhances democracy as I see it. But every time they would do a referendum in this province, it would cost approximately \$25 million. So if they were to do that, in terms of the saving you have in eliminating 27 MPPs versus having a referendum —

Mr Bagnell: Not to diminish your argument, Mr Marchese, but if cows had wings we'd all have to wear cowboy hats. The fact of the matter is I never read in this legislation anything about \$25 million. I read they're going to reduce the number of elected officials.

Mr Marchese: That's fine, okay, I understand.

You make the argument that there's \$11 million in saving. We make the argument, as MPPs, that we are going to have a problem in terms of our ability to service people. In some cases it'll be easier than in others. Some will have more of a burden than others in terms of their ability to respond to the problems that people tend to come to us with. It'll slow down that process, because with a limited staff there's only so much you can do.

In the north, as I argued with the previous speaker, it'll become more complicated, because their ridings will become even more huge. More than federal MPs, I think, we deal with a lot more practical, day-to-day things that people need a response to, so they will have a greater load in the north, where their ridings will be greater than some other countries in the world. In terms of servicing those communities, I think it's going to be tough. Is that a concern to you?

Mr Bagnell: I can't speak for northern Ontario, because our constituency is Ottawa-Carleton. I can tell

you that the premise that because you have less money to spend you have less opportunity to communicate is false. There are thousands of cases in the private sector where budgets have been slashed, reduced, staff has been eliminated and their productivity has gone up. General Motors in the United States has laid off over 500,000 people in the last 10 years, but they're selling more cars today than they were two years ago. Their output is greater, their communication capacity is greater as a result of that because they made their operation more efficient.

Mr Marchese: So do you believe, as the private sector does, that we MPPs can produce a lot more by cutting a lot more in our ability to communicate not just in terms of newsletters but by increasing the population that we have to serve, that somehow by having less we are able to produce more for them? Is that the argument you're making?

Mr Bagnell: I can't make that blanket statement, because it's too broad-based.

Mr Marchese: You were making the other statement as it relates to the private sector, but in relation to this you can't make any blanket statement?

Mr Bagnell: That's right. There are all kinds of examples in the private sector where reductions of overhead and cost and budgets have forced situations to occur where productivity has increased. We've been going through that in the private sector since 1991, when the economy took a substantial downturn.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): Thank you for coming today and making your comments about reduction of confusion and increased efficiency.

I'd like to pursue the increased efficiency argument, because the opposition tend to argue that you can't do as good a job when you have more people to serve. Do you think that part of the problem probably stems from the way the bureaucracy conducts business that makes it so difficult to get things done in terms of giving help to constituents for whatever minor, major or intermediate matter would be dealt with?

Mr Bagnell: I think it may be part of the problem. My exposure to the provincial bureaucracy has been for the most part a very positive experience in dealing with people in the Ministry of Transportation, predominantly over the last couple of months on the 416 issue and signage issues. I've had a tremendous amount of cooperation from them and the leadership that we've seen has been very good. That being said, I can't say I've had the same experience at regional and local government levels, where we spend probably 75% of our time.

Mr Hastings: In terms of your thinking, from members of the board of trade of Ottawa, has the argument ever come up that with the introduction of this legislation we are in effect reducing the disproportionate representative nature of government in terms of the numbers going up to about 103,000 to 112,000? If you look at other electoral maps across Canada, critics argue that the Klein government has made rural seats more valuable in terms of the vote than the citizens in an urban riding — Edmonton or Calgary. I'm wondering how you see this particular legislation applying to this urban area. Will this

make the vote more valuable relative to, say, northern Ontario in an election?

Mr Bagnell: I don't believe so. I believe a fundamental principle of democracy is not representation by neighbourhood but representation by the individual who votes. The vote is not something to be taken for granted. It's a privilege of democracy. We should fight like hell to maintain that privilege. Whether you have 103,000 people in your riding or 120,000 is not the issue; it's the quality of the person you elect that's the issue and how that individual represents the interests of their constituents. In the case of Ottawa-Carleton, I believe very strongly that we've had a tradition of excellent representation and that will continue because our people here will not allow substandard elected officials to go to Queen's Park.

Mr Maves: A couple of things. The first one is your statement about confusion of the electorate and I'm surprised at Mr Marchese, as a veteran member, not realizing the confusion that is out there. In my riding, the riding of Niagara Falls, I have a major street at the south end of the city, McLeod Road. A few streets underneath it to the south are not in my riding. They're in Niagara Falls but they're part of the Fort Erie riding, and then the riding boundary comes down, loops underneath and comes back up in the village of Chippawa. Great deal of confusion, all kinds of people during an election saying: "I don't understand why I'm not voting for a member for Niagara Falls and I'm voting for a member for Fort Erie." So I have to tell you that you're right on the money about confusion.

The other thing, someone from Ottawa would have a better appreciation, I think, than the members opposite about what federal members do. I worked as a legislative assistant for a federal member before I became a provincial member and we heard this argument yesterday that what we do is so much more significant in the lives of individual people than what federal members do. So I wrote down some things that I used to do with my federal member. We dealt with things like child pornography, dangerous offenders, young offenders, passports, visas, landed status, citizenship applications, immigration applications, disability, CPP, old age security, guaranteed income supplement. We talked about policing issues, RCMP, CSIS, clemency and parole and so on and so forth. I could go on and on. I've got pages of things we used to do. Can you tell me which one of those is not significant in the lives of people?

Mr Bagnell: Do I look stupid to you? They're all significant.

Mr Maves: You would also, therefore, have seen, from being in Ottawa, how much federal members do.

Mr Bagnell: I deal predominantly with business leaders and company owners and entrepreneurs in Ottawa-Carleton and the fact is that the first issue, the snap question that comes off their tongue, in terms of what they would most like to talk to their federal official about is income tax.

Mr Maves: I didn't get to it. It's further down the list, but it's huge, you're right.

Mr Bagnell: Because the amount of taxes that we pay in our country is — as you probably know, we're in the

top three in the G-7 and that is a concern for every working Canadian.

Mr Maves: Being someone from Ottawa, your focus is perhaps Ottawa, you see the amount of work that's on an MP's plate then, and it's no more or less, I would say, than what's on an MPP's plate.

Mr Bagnell: You're an elected official and your jurisdiction is the province of Ontario. I don't see either as more important than each other. I see them both as equally important to governing our country and representing the best interests of the population, which is what you do as an elected official.

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Mr Patten: Good morning, Mr Bagnell. How are you? I appreciate it's the board of trade of the Ottawa-Carleton area and I know many of your board members. I think your organization does a good job of staying on top of the economic issues. One of the things, Willy, that I haven't heard many witnesses talk about is the quality of representation. While I would agree that it depends on who you elect, it's going to be probably the chief determinant of that. All things being equal, I find it hard to appreciate that you take one riding in northern Ontario that has a distance between Windsor and Quebec City — Rainy River — and you're representing 19,000 and another one that represents 112,000 or 123,000 — what's Palladini's?

Interjection: It's 129,000.

Mr Patten: So there's a difference and maybe an acknowledgement you trade off size of population with size geographically. But I don't know how some of those northern members are going to be able to do their job and stay within their budget, I really don't. If they make any serious attempt at all to travel around their own riding to be able to just meet with them two or three times a year, I just can't understand that. Given the same resources, then you'd have I think a chance at doing that, but I suspect we won't have the same resources as MPs have and that gives, I think, whether the person is an excellent representative or not, a handicap in being able to truly represent people. On the representational side, what's your comment on that?

Mr Bagnell: I have long been not a believer in a situation that's going to please everybody. There's not a situation in business where every customer is happy every day and that's a fact of life. That being said, I'm sure that the present structures that exist within Queen's Park and the tremendous attributes that the opposition have will make the case known and ultimately the public will decide.

I can't comment on representation in the north and whether it's going to be better or worse, but I can tell you that I'm sure the president of the northern Ontario chambers of commerce would be more than happy to respond to that. I don't speak for businesses anywhere outside of Ottawa-Carleton, outside of our membership. I don't really know whether that's a fair situation but I know that reduction of MPs and the saving of \$11 million is a good thing for this province and the balancing off against the federal ridings is an even better thing. So now we know that when we elect someone in the riding of XYZ in Ottawa-Carleton, you are the person

that's elected there, this is the person that's elected federally and they both come from the same area, full stop, and there's absolutely no room for confusion or margin of error.

Mr Patten: You spoke about the percentage. It's interesting to look at comparisons with other provinces. Ontario already had the lowest ratio of MPPs to MPs in beginning to look at this exercise. It now will by far have the lowest amount. It seems to me, for example, Alberta, which is often used as a model, and Mr Harris refers to what happens there very often, they'll have 26 MPs and 83 MPPs, better than three times the number; BC, 32 MPs, 75 MPPs; Manitoba, 14 MPs, 57 MPPs. My point is that — I'm not proposing that we go to that extent, of course — we will be at the very bottom in terms of consideration. Are all of those provinces out of step? Is there not some reason that we're not looking at or considering, when they think that the provincial representation is important enough to have a discrepancy between the number of MPs and MPPs?

Mr Bagnell: Leadership is a funny thing.

Mr Patten: It can be a funny thing.

Mr Bagnell: Sometimes you get dragged into the game, and you remember in your football days, Richard, as I do that sometimes the coach throws you in in the fourth quarter and says, "Get out there and make it happen." Sometimes leadership is where you have to get out in front of the pack and the fact of the matter is that just because something's done in Alberta — I don't necessarily agree with what Ralph Klein has done in Alberta and I believe that Ontario has to take a leadership role as the economic heart of our country. The numbers prove that. We represent about 35% of the population and in round figures 50% of the business. So what we're doing in this province today specific to this issue has met, I think, with a great deal of approval, at least from my membership.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Bagnell. We appreciate your input here this morning.

ALEX CULLEN

The Chair: Our next presenter is Alex Cullen, a regional councillor. Good morning, Mr Cullen, and welcome to our committee. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Alex Cullen: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. My name is Alex Cullen. I'm a member of regional council here in Ottawa-Carleton, representing a ward in the west end of the region overlapping with the city of Ottawa and the city of Nepean.

I'm here to talk to you about Bill 81, the purpose of which is of course to realign the provincial riding boundaries with the federal riding boundaries. I want to tell you that I first heard this notion back at the Royal York Hotel in 1994 when Mike Harris, the then leader of the third party in the Legislature, was addressing the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. At the end of his discussion — of course it was the lead-up to the upcoming provincial election — he commented on the Common Sense Revolution promise to reduce the number of MPPs to the same level as the federal and that the next time he came to the AMO conference he hoped to see one quarter

less municipalities. That was the end note of his presentation to us and I must say, as we stood up to applaud, some more enthusiastically than others, there was a buzz in the room, "What was he talking about reducing the number of municipalities?"

The revolution is in place and I presume it's ticking along. We are a little bit interested in what is happening with municipalities, especially with the range of cuts that have come down from the provincial government. There are 850 municipalities in Ontario and if you were to reduce that by a third, you'd come down to less than 600. We watch with interest what's happening in Metro Toronto. We've been told time and time again by the minister, "Reorganize, restructure, figure it out yourselves; if you don't, we will." We want to know what plan B is. We don't know if there is a plan B.

In my previous existence I was a school board trustee from 1982 to 1988 with the Ottawa Board of Education and I learned from that experience that indeed there had been a significant downsizing, restructuring of school boards that happened some 15 years ago. There were over 2,000 school boards. There was a time when every municipality had its own elementary panel and its own collegiate or secondary panel and the separate panel and so you had literally thousands of school boards. That was reduced by the Conservative government of that day to approximately 180 school boards. Today we have 170. I can speak to the issue of amalgamating school boards. That is a very topical issue here in Ottawa-Carleton where we have six school boards, where people feel there are far too many and wish to reduce that to an Ottawa-Carleton public, an Ottawa-Carleton separate and, of course, a French-language school board.

I do want to note, though, there's a big difference between what is being proposed by the province with respect to school boards and with respect to MPPs and MPs. It comes back to an issue I'm going to touch on, which is the notion of administrative efficiency and political accountability, that if you create administrative units that are far too large you lose something in terms of political accountability. I'll come back to that in a moment.

My own experience dealing with electoral reform dates back over a dozen years. When I got elected school board trustee, they elected six from one half of the city and six from the other half of the city. You'd have over 40 people running. My name was C; I got on. As a result, I was able to use provisions under the Municipal Act to generate a petition to restructure the Ottawa Board of Education to a more local representative basis and that's where I first learned the rules of electoral distribution, because of course there was opposition and we went to the Ontario Municipal Board. We won. We had done our homework and we began the restructuring of the school board to make it more politically accountable, so we had areas where people were elected from that area and were accountable to that area. The notion of size of the area was very important. You start from the basis of one person, one vote, but you do of course allow for adjustments up or down to the extent of 25%, to take into account communities of interest and geography. That was a lesson I learned in that particular aspect. When the

Peterson government changed the electoral basis of trustees from assessment to population — I was a trustee — I was worth millions in assessment, but then after that I was only worth thousands of voters. Then the school board moved to one trustee per ward and that's the way the system has continued today.

Just a couple of years ago we went through regional reform. At that point I was a member of the city of Ottawa council and we watched with great interest the notion of a directly elected regional council and the electoral consequences as a result. We had to deal with maps and we had to deal with the notion of one person, one vote and how much you adjust up and down and how much you recognize communities of interest and geography.

I must tell you that here in Ottawa-Carleton we are very happy with a directly elected regional council. You have to have a regional government in this community simply for the diversity of services that must be provided. However, now that level of government is directly accountable to its electorate for its \$1-billion budget that it provides.

That walked me into the federal redistribution that went on just a couple of years ago, when Parliament was going through its regular examination of federal ridings. They came to this town and they were looking at different maps, and I went to them and said: "Look, your maps are going to divide communities of interest. You should take into account the recent effort that happened at regional government, and you should recognize the communities of interest that we've identified and have adjusted for through this very participatory process." I'm pleased to say that they did. Certainly the riding that I live in, which is Ottawa West, takes up my new regional ward plus the ward immediately to the south of me.

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But I think the issue that comes back is: What are the principles you're dealing with here? The reason I draw this to your attention is that your bill abdicates your responsibility to do that. Your bill gives over to another level of government the control, the power and the principles by which redistribution is going to occur. I'm not going to argue about downsizing politicians. We're so — I don't know what the word is — cannibalistic. Politicians are not held in high regard, and people talk about less politicians. Certainly when we went through regional reform we didn't create any more politicians. I'm a little interested because 20 years ago we had more politicians. But people seem to be satisfied with that if we are going to go back to that kind of scenario.

I am concerned about administrative size and political accountability, because with my experience in the OBE, how could you, as a trustee responsible for seven wards, half the city, go out and see every school? It was impossible. How could your electorate get hold of you and hold you accountable? It was impossible. It was through the people's efforts there, the community's efforts there, that we changed to a more local representative system.

You are moving to a larger system here. You have to think in terms of political accountability and administration. But I make the point to you that you should be masters of your own fate, your own control.

We know the federal system is driven by Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward Island has a constitutional guarantee for four seats. So you take the population of Prince Edward Island, you divide it by four, and you're off and running. Then you make the adjustments according to communities of interest and geography.

Well, in geography, and the point was raised earlier when I came in, you have to think in terms of the administration of the geography in trying to accomplish your responsibilities. I would say to you that too large an area makes it very, very difficult to discharge your responsibilities and to be held accountable for those responsibilities. I draw, as I said, on my own experience as trustee for half the city of Ottawa, 150,000 people in my half, and trying to represent them on the Ottawa Board of Education. That's why we moved to something more local, smaller, more controllable, more accountable to the electorate.

I would have to say to you that perhaps your objective to have the number of MPPs reduced may or may not be a good idea. Quite frankly, I want to make sure that the public has as much voice in the running of the Legislature as possible, so I am not convinced about the downsizing argument, although I know it's very politically popular. Certainly if we're talking about regional reform here, the notion of one-tier government, people are thinking of removing more politicians. But I am looking at administrative units that are politically accountable, administratively efficient and whose control lies within the very body that you're electing representatives to.

I believe the provincial Legislature should continue to be in control of setting the boundaries and the numbers of representatives to it. By hitching your wagon to federal redistribution, you put yourself on to another set of principles that you do not have direct control over and standards you do not have direct control over. Quite frankly, I don't think the provincial ridings of the provincial Legislature in Ontario should be dictated by the size of Prince Edward Island. Those are my comments to you, and I welcome any questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Cullen. We have three minutes per caucus left, Mr Baird followed by Mrs Marland, Mr Maves and Mr Hastings, so you can decide how much time you want to take.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Thank you very much for your presentation. We appreciate the time you took to come in and talk to us. Do you support Bill 81? As constituted, would you support it?

Mr Cullen: As I said, my concern is the notion of giving over responsibility or giving over the notion of local control to the federal government. I have a problem with that. Bills can be amended.

Mr Baird: But as constituted, if this bill were to go through as is, could I tell people that Alex Cullen supports it or is opposed to it?

Mr Cullen: I'm opposed to it. You can say that, John.

Mr Baird: You have an interesting background with the regional council when regional council was reformed, when your ward would have almost doubled in size.

Mr Cullen: That's right.

Mr Baird: How have you found that? Are you able to do just as good a job representing the folks that you do? You're certainly very hardworking.

Mr Cullen: Two things happened with that. In my original ward, I sat on both city council and regional council. I had a smaller ward, but I had two councils and two budgets and two levels of government to deal with. With direct election, I lost those city responsibilities. I became focused only at the regional level. The ward got larger, but my responsibilities changed. I'm no longer responsible for Stop signs, for dogs in the park, for parks themselves, for city streets. So, even though the ward got larger, my responsibilities were more defined. It was at the regional level; I lost the city responsibilities. Most people remember the city responsibilities.

Mr Baird: You recall we were at a town hall meeting in Bayshore discussing tenant issues, where a concerned resident got up and said: "Listen, you're cutting everyone else, you're cutting this and you're cutting that. When are you going to start cutting yourselves?" How important do you think leadership by example is; before we ask others in the public sector to reduce costs, that it's important we try to lead by example, to say, "Yes, we can try to do more with less," and "Yes, we're going to show that we're so committed to deficit reduction and we're so committed to cutting the burden on working families we'll reduce our own numbers"?

Mr Cullen: I believe the best example you could set would be, I suppose, to reduce your own office budgets, to reduce your own salaries. That would be saving costs.

Mr Baird: So 10.5% rather than the 20%.

Mr Cullen: I don't think that reducing the number of areas is necessarily a cost saving, because I look to the ability to hold politicians accountable, and the larger the area, the harder it is to do so, particularly when the ability to set those boundaries is set by criteria set outside of Ontario. Quite frankly, why should PEI set the size of the riding here in Ontario? That's what it is. That's what you guys have done.

Mr Baird: Under the Constitution, it's actually Quebec that is guaranteed 75 seats. So it's all apportioned from there.

Mr Grandmaître: Let's talk about regional government. Maybe I should talk about eastern Ontario, Alex. As you know, eastern Ontario has been claiming for the last 75 years that Queen's Park is not very interested in eastern Ontario or it's simply interested in Metro. Right now we're talking about a megacity of 2.3 million people in the Metro area, and your turn will come.

Mr Cullen: I'm told we're fourth on the list.

Mr Grandmaître: Well, I don't know if you're third or fourth.

Mr Cullen: Hamilton-Wentworth is second, and Sudbury is third.

Mr Grandmaître: While you were discussing this with Mr Baird, I'm glad that you didn't blame the former minister for this reorganization of regional government in Ottawa-Carleton. I'm pleased about that.

Mr Cullen: No, it was needed.

Mr Grandmaître: Let's talk about our loss in eastern Ontario. As you know, we'll be losing five MPPs in eastern Ontario, 24% of our representation. Imagine how we felt before; imagine how we will feel tomorrow when this bill is in place, because this government is determined, they will put it in place. I want to remind you that

your regional government is next. Who knows? You might not be around very long.

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Mr Cullen: One of the largest complaints we heard during the regional reorganization process — and I'm a supporter of the reform that we went through. I think direct election is important for accountability. But the debate is not finished and the whole issue of one tier — the concern is the loss of community voice through a much larger administrative entity. This is a big country and it has to look at the most effective way of allowing for popular representation in the House of Commons. But I'm a little concerned when one province decides that it has to accept the federal standard and we end up losing community voices. By the loss of those seats, you lose community voices. If Hawkesbury has to be joined in with Ottawa or if —

Mr Baird: That's with Ottawa now.

Mr Cullen: That may be a stretch, but pick a smaller community. If Carleton Place or even Kanata has to be drawn in with Ottawa, then the majority will of course prevails, but it is clear that voice is going to be drowned out by the larger voices elsewhere. Then how do we ensure that those community voices are heard? That's why the smaller, more politically accountable units have their value. I'm not saying it's a blank cheque. You have to balance all these things. There are values to this, but I think what should be driving the Legislature is what is the best means of political accountability, because through political accountability you control spending, you control politicians' behaviour, you make sure government carries out the mandate, the wishes of the people. That's one of the things I think this committee and this Legislature should be concerned about.

Mr Marchese: Mr Cullen, just some quick things. I think you're quite correct. I don't believe Quebec has any guarantee of seats. During the constitutional discussions Quebec was very worried about its diminishing numbers and was talking about guaranteeing a certain number of seats so that it wouldn't fall below, I believe, 75 or 77.

Mr Cullen: That's right.

Mr Marchese: But there is no other guarantee in the Constitution that speaks to that.

I happen to agree literally with most of what you have said. I know the board of trade doesn't agree with you either, but I understand that. I want to make the point about the redistribution and aligning ourselves with the federal government as being a profound mistake. The argument the board of trade has made and Mr Maves makes is that there is confusion and we're going to clear that up. I didn't argue that there isn't confusion and that some people would prefer that there be less confusion — I agree — but I didn't think that solves the political questions around this redistribution matter. But they made it appear, both the board of trade and Mr Maves, that somehow there is a great deal of confusion and we're going to solve it now with this. That's not really the real issue. As you talked about, we're talking about accountability and whether or not we're able to service our communities effectively.

Do you believe, Mr Cullen, that this government has made a mistake in terms of how it has decided to come

to the conclusion about how to redistribute and how to eliminate seats without going through the usual process that we've gone through since 1962 of having a commission decide this?

Mr Cullen: It's very important for people to participate in the process by which they determine their boundaries. We do it at the municipal level. We did it at the school board level. You do it at the municipal level. The redistribution commissions by holding those hearings, by discovering what communities of interest are, because communities do change, by hearing the concerns of people who may live in Rainy River and how the heck do they get down to wherever they get down to, to talk to their MPP where their constituency office is, all these issues have to be heard and weighed and balanced. Unfortunately, by tying your wagon to a federal process, you are allowing federal initiatives or federal principles that have been decided by people in the Maritimes and Quebec and BC and the Prairies to determine the definition of community of interest and geography. I don't think that's right. I think we have a community here in Ontario that is diverse and whose voices should be heard in the Legislature.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Cullen. We appreciate your input this morning.

We have a 20-minute break now so we have a couple of housekeeping issues we'd like to clear up. Since we last stopped the discussions on the requests, we've now had four requests from MPPs to have status in front of the committee, one being Peter North, who does not belong to any particular caucus, and three Liberal requests.

Mr Patten: Power of one.

Interjection.

The Chair: Sorry. We're now up to five, four written and one verbal request. I had put forward the suggestion that as a compromise we could allow caucuses to use their assigned time slots to slot in their people if they chose to do that. So that we can move this discussion on, I'd like to start by asking, do we have unanimous consent for that particular proposal?

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): No.

The Chair: In the absence of that then, I would like to have someone put a motion on the floor that we could debate —

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Chairman, which proposal?

The Chair: The proposal that the caucuses use their assigned spots to schedule any MPPs they want to make a presentation in front of the committee.

Mr Marchese: Are you proposing that motion for someone to move?

The Chair: No. I'm asking, is there unanimous consent for that particular approach? In the absence of unanimous consent, I would entertain a motion to deal with the issue.

Mrs Marland: Can I speak to this?

The Chair: I'm asking for unanimous consent. If we don't have it, then fine, we'll entertain a motion. Do we have unanimous consent?

Mrs Marland: No.

The Chair: We don't have unanimous consent. In the absence of unanimous consent, so that we can put some

structure on the discussion, I would entertain a motion to deal with the issue.

Mrs Marland: Mr Chair, can you clarify something for me? To understand this clearly, other than Mr North, who sits as an independent member, you have had requests from sitting members of the official opposition party, not the NDP.

The Chair: We've had three requests from Liberal members. We've had written requests. We have a written request from Peter North and we've had an oral request from Mr Hampton to have status in front of this committee at some place in its public hearings.

Mrs Marland: From Mr Hampton?

The Chair: An oral request from Mr Hampton, yes. So that's the status. To deal with the issue, because we have a difference of opinion, I would like someone to put forward a motion so that at least we have something to debate so we can put some structure on the discussion.

Mr Grandmaitre: Mr Chair, if we couldn't get — I know you're looking for a motion —

Mr Sergio: Open it for discussion.

Mr Grandmaitre: — opening for a discussion. If we're not going to get consent around the table, let's deal with how we're going to arrive at a compromise.

The Chair: I would like to open it for discussion by having something specific. We discussed this for about 20 minutes before; we made no progress. Let's put some structure on it by somebody putting forward a motion so we know what we're debating.

Mr Marchese: Fair enough. I move that we allow any member of the Legislature who wishes to appear before this committee to do so.

Mrs Marland: I'll speak to that.

The Chair: We now have a motion on the floor. Mr Sergio was the first one and then Ms Marland.

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Mr Sergio: Yesterday when the requests were brought to the attention of the committee, we couldn't have the agreement of the government side allowing sitting members to make a presentation, and that's fine. I think we understood the mood of those members. Then you said perhaps we can solve the situation since each party has an allocation of time, whatever, a 25% allocation of time. I thought that was a fair suggestion, that was a good recommendation. As you can see, we have a lot of openings here. Since each party is allocated a block of time, I wonder if that can be placed on the floor and allow each party to decide if it wants to split its allocated time among some sitting members, if it so wishes, or give it to individual members of the public or groups. I think that would be fair for a number of reasons.

As you can see, the requests we have come from northern Ontario, areas where, as I said yesterday, the needs of the people are much different from those of the people in Metropolitan Toronto. Because of the area they represent, I think it would be very fair for the local representative to speak on behalf of those people who are in secluded, far-to-reach places.

The other item that we have here to deal with, the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty —

The Chair: We'll deal with that as a separate issue.

Mr Sergio: Yes. In cases like that, people have to come 300, 400 miles to make a presentation. Wouldn't it be better that we hear from somebody, some sitting member, anyone who could speak for people from a remote area? I would really put that to the members on the other side. At least give us the opportunity to allocate our own time to whomever we wish.

If the argument should prevail that a sitting member has the opportunity to come and debate it at the committee level or in the House, let me say that often our own time is being limited as to the amount of debate, to the point that members are not allowed to have that opportunity. Having said that, I really hope that the members will take the opportunity and allow the parties to allocate their time as they wish.

Mrs Marland: Mr Chairman, this kind of request has seldom come up in the last three parliaments, and when it has — and I'm speaking from dealing with it as an opposition member when it has come up — I have accepted the argument of the government of that term, both the Liberal and the NDP government. I've accepted the argument because I understood the argument to be fair. I'm going to place the same argument that was given when I was in opposition for 10 years, and I think it's the only position we can take on this matter.

I would make an exception for Mr North, but speaking schedules for sitting members are set within each caucus by the government House leader, the whip and sometimes by the leader. I find this particular situation that we're in today quite unusual, especially when we have a request from the leader of the New Democratic Party, who has more power than anyone to decide when he can speak in the House. I'm not in a position to check Hansard so I'm not sure whether he spoke at second reading to Bill 81. However, the other person who is making the request, Mr Brown, has spoken to Bill 81 in the chamber.

I see us discussing what could be a very dangerous precedent here, because as elected representatives of our ridings, the process for us is not the committee process; it's in the chamber, it's in the House. The committee process is to travel in some cases. In not all cases do committees travel, but the point of travelling is to hear from the public; it's for input from the public, not from members who are sitting in Queen's Park all the time. I didn't come to Ottawa today to hear my colleagues in the House, especially someone who is a leader, who can decide at any time on any reading whether he speaks to the matter. If the leader of the NDP caucus hasn't spoken on second reading, he will have his opportunity as leader of that party to speak at third reading.

Apart from the dangerous precedent, I think it's absolutely contrary to the purpose of committees and committee hearings. Every time the opposition asks for public hearings, that's exactly what it is: It's to hear from the public. This kind of request, in my opinion, is absurd and not the purpose for which committee hearings are held. When we get into clause-by-clause, if they still have some comments, they can put those on the record.

Certainly we've heard this morning, from the questions from both the opposition parties — and in fairness to them, I would do the same thing if I were in opposition. When you're asking questions you're in a position where

you're stating your opinion as well, so I find it amazing to have this request. As I say, the only exception I would make is Mr North, who does not have the advantage of —

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): He spoke to the bill in the House.

Mrs Marland: If he's already spoken to the bill, then it doesn't even apply. I was going to say he doesn't have the advantage of going through a whip or a House leader, as he does with a party. I think that's sufficient on the subject.

The Chair: We have several people here who want to speak to this. I would ask that you keep your comments rather concise so that we don't spend the whole day debating this particular issue.

Mr Stewart: I will be concise because much of what I said has been said by Mrs Marland, but I think we're missing the point. It was always my understanding that these were classed as public hearings, and I think we should be out to listen to the public. We are going to the north, so we will hear the public who live in the north.

What this will become, if the MPPs are allowed to do this, will be another indication of grandstanding. I can tell you, there's not one politician who doesn't just thrive on that sort of thing, and I think it takes it away from the people who want to come out and genuinely give their input on this sort of thing. I definitely will be voting against it.

The other point that I think we're missing and the public keeps telling us about is that we politicians tend to not listen to the people. That's what these hearings are about, and I suggest that we listen to the people and let them have their say.

Mr Baird: Very briefly, I respect this is a fair issue for discussion; it's not a black or white issue. I do feel, though, that these are public hearings. We have first, second and third readings in the House where members have a significant opportunity to contribute as well through their caucuses. I agree with the member for Mississauga South that members have the opportunity to speak in the House; these hearings are the public's opportunity.

I would also note that opposition parties right now — and I think there's some argument that this is not unreasonable — get two thirds of the time in the Legislative Assembly, that 16 members get one third of the time and 82 government members get one third of the time. I can only speak for one eighty-secondth of one third of the House time, whereas some members opposite can speak for one sixteenth of one third of the time in the House.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: I'm not arguing. That's the way it is and I wouldn't argue against that. I think there is a strong case to be made that this is both fair and reasonable. I guess the point is now that, as a government member, two thirds of opposition time isn't enough, and I would argue if you look at most bills it would be significantly more, probably approaching 80%. Certainly on Bill 49, 92% of the time on third reading was given to the opposition. I just think it's important that we respect that privilege that's accorded to opposition members in the House and not extend that even further.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): First of all, let me deal with the precedent issue. Mrs Marland usually has a good memory and I trust she will remember that when there was a similar controversial issue — controversial because it touched different communities in different ways; I'm talking here about the debates around Sunday shopping in the late 1980s — MPPs appeared before the committee to talk about how Sunday shopping might potentially affect their communities. In fact, as we travelled the province, a number of MPPs appeared before the committee to talk about the various religious views within their communities, the traditions of their communities etc. So if you're worried about setting a precedent here, I think the facts speak the other way, that when you talk about how a specific piece of legislation might work changes in particular regions or communities, the precedent is that MPPs have appeared before committees like this before to talk about those issues.

1030

I would argue that's exactly the situation here. In these public hearings we're not so much carrying on the kind of debate we would have in the Legislature; what we're talking about are some fundamentals of the operations of democracy and representation in different parts of the province. I would say to you that's exactly the kind of role a constituency representative is expected to fulfil. I have two roles, one in the Legislature and one in a constituency, and they're quite different roles. I suspect that all of us recognize they're quite different roles.

I may debate all kinds of points in the Legislature without advocating, necessarily, on behalf of my constituents or without coming to the point under debate from the particular perspective of some of my constituents, but this bill and all that flows from it touches a number of people in different parts of the province in quite different ways. I can tell you, as somebody who comes from northern Ontario, that there will be all kinds of people who will not be able to attend these hearings when they move to Dryden in the northwest. There will be first nations that simply will not be able to afford to lease a float plane and fly out. There will be all kinds of other rural communities that are at least three hours away from where the hearings are going to be held. They're within the region but they're three hours away in terms of driving. They won't be able to be heard.

I'm saying to you that if you're going to make such fundamental changes in representation and in the way democracy operates in terms of communities, and communities and interest, and who has access to representation and who doesn't, I think it's incumbent on us to hear people who can speak about how this is going to impact on different communities in different regions of the province. In my part of the province this is going to create a constituency that is larger than 45 of the 50 states in the United States. It's going to create a constituency that is 1.4 times larger than the British Isles. It's going to create a constituency that is as large —

Mrs Marland: Is that population or geographic miles?

Mr Hampton: We're talking geographically. It's going to be geographically as large as the country of Sweden. Many of the communities are simply not accessible by highways. For example, there are 50 first nations and

only about 15 of those are accessible by highway. You cannot get into or out of many of them during various times of the year, depending on when freeze-up or breakup is. Many of them are not always served by consistent telephone or telecommunications.

It seems to me that if you want to look at precedent, look at the Sunday shopping hearings, which happened in the late 1980s, that clearly established that MPPs appeared before the committee to talk about how the proposed legislation would impact on their region, on their community.

Second, if you think about the nature of this bill, what it's about — representation, communities of interest, how people are represented, if they are represented — it seems to me that MPPs, in their role as spokespersons for their constituencies, for their communities, ought properly to be allowed to appear to explain the impacts of this legislation and to explain who will be left out, who will be counted and what the eventual outcome of this legislation may well be.

This is not an opportunity to debate before the committee what might be debated in the Legislature. It's an opportunity to talk about, "This is how this legislation will potentially impact upon different regions, different communities across the province." I would argue that it would be quite proper in these circumstances for MPPs to appear. Not to allow MPPs to appear, it seems to me, loses for the benefit of the committee a lot of information, a lot of evidence we ought properly to consider.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Hampton. Our next presenter is here. We have about three minutes before she is due to present. So we'll hear from as many people as we can, and at some point in time we have to come to a vote on this.

Mr Maves: I was against this yesterday. I'm even more opposed to it now. Mr Hampton not only spoke to it in the House, as did Mr Miclash, who is another person who will want to speak to it, and Mr North — they spoke to it in the House — Mr Hampton just spoke to it again and he'll speak to it all day. These are some of the things he just said now he would say in his presentation, so now there's even less of a reason to have him on the list to speak.

One of the things Mr Hampton said was that this bill touches people in many different ways. I would suggest that every bill we do in the Legislature touches people in different ways, but when we have public hearings we don't put all our members on there, because they are just that: They're public hearings.

Last, because I'm trying to move along and let someone else speak, at the end of yesterday I asked a member of the public how he felt about MPPs taking up time and speaking during committee. He was appalled and offended by it, and I think most members of the public would be, so I'll maintain my position against the motion.

Mr Hastings: To speak directly to Mr Hampton's point about using a precedent in terms of having the representative of a riding make a presentation, there are more appropriate ways of going about that. I suggest that the way to handle this kind of thing in the future is to have a fundamental reordering of the standing orders of

the Legislature. Then you might be able to accommodate that particular set of circumstances.

A second way you might be able to do it, in a re-examination of this, is that if you even extended your thinking to looking at having fellow MPPs make a presentation, then it ought to be on a particular day set aside for that purpose, not for interfering with the public coming to make their views known.

I can't believe that one would think we're so isolated that you can't use basic telephone if it's getting down to that, or passenger pigeon if you want to get to the point of absurdity, for dealing with isolated communities. I know that information technology can be harnessed to deal with this. I think it is stretching it a little too much. The whole point of creating a precedent on the Sunday shopping is that while it may have been done at that time, now is the time to take a look at the whole way in which we do business through committees, and that's a reordering of the standing orders, not this piecemeal thing. Then they can use this precedent for the next thing which is fundamental and basic.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I stated yesterday that I was opposed to this. I have not changed my opinion. Like Mr Maves, I'm even more convinced that we should not allow this to happen. I think it is an open forum for the public. We're here to listen to them. I don't need to listen to Mr Hampton or Mr Marchese or the other honourable members again on public hearings because we listen to them in the House. I've heard Mr Hampton's debate this morning, and it's no different than what I'll hear in the House.

Maybe there was a precedent set earlier. I don't know. I wasn't here in that last Legislature; I'm only here for this Legislature. I think it's a dangerous precedent that we could be setting and I think there is a possibility that we could be displacing members of the public on public hearings. I'm totally opposed to it, so I'll stay that way.

The Chair: We will continue the discussion when we break for lunch. There are three more people on the speaking list: Mr Gilchrist, Mr Marchese and Mr Grandmaître. That will have allowed everybody except Mr Sergio to make a comment. At the end of that we will have a vote.

1040

ABIGAIL POLLONETSKY

The Chair: Our next presenter is Abigail Pollonetsky. Good morning. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Ms Abigail Pollonetsky: Thank you for inviting members of the public to make presentations on this extremely important bill. I just want to start by saying I'm a little bit at a disadvantage because my husband locked the keys in the car, so I don't have my purse, so take me as I am, with very few notes.

I am here because I am a concerned member of the public. I am a homeowner in Ottawa-Carleton. I am a very active member of my community. I'm also a woman with a disability, as you can probably tell from my cane. These things are not irrelevant to some of the points I'd like to make. I hope these are in order. If people have

questions of me, as well as my having questions of you, I would be very happy to entertain them.

I am afraid of the notion of a smaller Legislature. I have to say that up front and straight away. As much as you gentlemen and women know each other and interact with each other in the House on a daily basis, it's not a point that necessarily reaches out to the general public. We don't know the ins and outs unless we're glued to the parliamentary channel, which I suspect is not in the top 10 of the ratings. So it's very important for us members of the public to have a chance —

Mr Stewart: How do you know that?

Ms Pollonetsky: I am right, except that there are some political junkies like me, and I do flip, but with the clicker I can go right past you men and women, and I do. At the same time, all levity aside — and I probably don't have a lot in common with everybody at this table or in the House — I don't want to see your roles diminished in Parliament. I think it is vitally important that we maintain a level of representation for all people in this province, and in this country as a matter of fact.

I don't think I am in a minority. I am going to say it straight out and I would like this on the record. I have trust and faith in politicians. That is why I live in a democracy. That is why I, becoming increasingly less able physically, put a lot of trust in the men and women who are elected to speak for me and for other taxpayers and for other members of the community.

Taking the Legislature down any more would mean fewer access points for people. With all due respect to the honourable member who talked about communication, I would like to point out that voice mail may be the wave of the future, but it doesn't necessarily result in better access to government.

I have a standing request by voice mail, snail mail, to get a replacement for a birth certificate for my 16-year-old son, who is naturally anxious to have it replaced since he put it in the washing machine, because he wants to get his licence. As a matter of fact, it doesn't disturb me very much that it's taking a long time to get the replacement for his birth certificate. As a mother of a 16-year-old-boy — I'm sure there are some other parents of teenagers here — it doesn't necessarily give my comfort level much security to know that he will eventually, when that licence comes — now, this sounds irrelevant, but it isn't. What it points to is that with fewer resources being allocated to people in government, with layoffs, which I also have a very big problem with, it means fewer people are there to respond to requests from ordinary citizens dealing with things that could be as minor as a delayed birth certificate being replaced, but could be very major.

The relevance, as far as this bill is concerned, is that in the long range it will mean fewer representatives will be available for me to have any access point to, and that scares me. As a woman with a disability, as I pointed out, it scares me to have any diminishing of access points for me. These are some of the reasons I am opposed to this bill.

Another thing that strikes me, and I don't know if it has struck people on this committee this week in particular, with the American elections that have just taken place: With larger constituencies and fewer representa-

tives, it would be more expensive for a person to run for office. I think this is part of an Americanization which, I would suggest, is not necessarily what people in Ontario really want. We are very fortunate in this province. Any man or woman who chooses to stand for office, who has the qualifications and the interest and the backing of his or her party, is in general able to. With larger constituencies, with larger districts, it will mean that perforce only people with access to increased funds — not only, but in general it would be harder for a person to stand for office unless he or she had means of his or her own. That speaks to me of Americanization, which I don't think is something we're in favour of in the main, in the first place. In the second place, it's again lack of accessibility and lack of entrance into a system that's very important to all of us.

I'll just finish by repeating the sentiment, possibly unpopular at the moment, that I believe people who run and stand for office are extremely laudable, honourable people who are doing a job that probably should be paid a lot more, to be a representative of constituents. It's something that I believe we should take a stand to make sure continues rather than diminishes. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We've got about four minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with Mr Grandmaître.

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you for those compliments. I'll take this salary increase and I'm sure my friends across will second the motion.

We are elected to serve, and I think this model will not improve the services that are supposed to be provided to our constituents. By increasing the number of people to serve and not increasing my constituency staff, I think people are penalized. I know exactly what you mean when you talk about voice mail and 1-800 numbers. They are very, very popular, but you never get to talk to a human being. We're supposed to serve the public. We're supposed to be — well, not the government the closest to our people. I think municipal government is much closer.

I think with this model, the federal model, it is a disservice to our population not only in Ottawa-Carleton, because we're not dearly affected in Ottawa-Carleton; we're losing one riding, Ottawa-Rideau, if I'm not mistaken. But for the rest of this province, especially in northern Ontario, I think it's a disservice. I'm glad you brought these very valid points to the attention of the government. Let's hope they will realize that we are important representatives and you are important people in Ontario and you deserve better services.

Ms Pollonetsky: Thank you.

Mr Sergio: Just a quick question. Of course there are some savings, according to the government. It could be \$1 million; it could be \$11 million. We haven't seen any figures. Nobody has seen any figures. Perhaps not even the members of the government have seen any figures whatsoever. But if there are some savings, do you think we should compromise democracy, if you will, and effective representation for the sake of a few savings?

Ms Pollonetsky: Absolutely not. I think, looking at figures that aren't — we don't know what those figures are. What we do see as members of the public is that we're not getting our phone calls returned, we're not

getting our appointments made because of this hypothetical saving in cutbacks. I don't believe in slash and burn. I think every person who isn't there in the office answering a phone, working on a case, is a person who's either unemployed and on UI or on welfare. I think the taxpayer base is something the government should be much more concerned about, and in order to make the taxpayer base healthy, more people have to be working. It's sort of a no-brainer.

1050

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Ms Pollonetsky, for your presentation. You mention one thing that is different from what we're heard so far, and that is that it's likely to make it more expensive for people to run because the bigger the riding, the bigger the allocation and the bigger the need to be able to put up the money to run a good campaign. So it'll make it tougher for some who will have a harder time raising the money than others. I want to thank you for that point.

The other point was raised by my colleague here to the right: Is the \$11-million saving, assuming that's the case, worth it in terms of democracy? You answered that. Partly what they also argue is that it will be less confusing. The board of trade made that argument too, by the way, and they make this argument all the time, that it will be less confusing to have one single boundary, federal and provincial. But is that too another good argument to make as to why we might want to reduce seats by 27? They argue that it's less confusing, therefore it's good. I argue that if that's the basis of the argument we make, it's pretty weak in terms of why we would eliminate 27 seats. Do you agree or disagree with those positions?

Ms Pollonetsky: Given that my position from the start has been that I am opposed to making the House smaller and the number of representatives smaller, it would stand to reason that I don't necessarily buy that as an argument, that it would make it less confusing. From what I understand from one of the regional politicians in Ottawa-Carleton, it would mean that a riding would stretch all the way from Kanata to Perth, I believe it is. It just doesn't make any sense logically because the constituencies are so incredibly different and so diverse. So on that ground I don't think it makes a lot of sense.

Mr Marchese: One of the problems that I believe this government has made is to decide — the decision came by the cabinet, I suspect, from the Premier's office: "We're just going to get rid of 27 seats." Traditionally in the past, since 1962, we've had a different process. We've had commissions decide what was a fair way to either make redistributions or eliminate seats or increase them. It was, I believe, a more objective way to deal with that issue than to have the government decide: "We're just going to lead here. We're going to cut seats." Do you believe that's a good process they have engaged in?

Ms Pollonetsky: Oh, absolutely not. I have to say, with all due respect to members of the government, that I see a lot of willy-nilly pronouncements being made: "We'll cut this and it'll do that. We'll cut that, it'll do this." It's not necessarily something that is of benefit to the citizens of Ontario and it's not a process that I am in favour of, just making a pronouncement.

Mr Marchese: They also argue that by cutting, of course, we'll make it more efficient. I hear them saying this all the time. "We're going to do more with less. We're going to be more efficient, make things more effective." Do you really think by reducing 27 seats that somehow we can do a more effective job of representing a bigger population both in my downtown riding of Toronto and in the north — Kenora, let's say?

Ms Pollonetsky: I think the points I made in my initial presentation speak to that. I don't believe it would make for a more effective, efficient governance from Queen's Park. At the risk of sounding like a Pollyanna, I really believe that members of provincial legislatures and members of the federal Parliament do a very good job. Having fewer people doing that job is not logical. How can fewer people provide more service? It doesn't make sense.

Mr Hastings: Ms Pollonetsky, thank you for coming in today. I am intrigued by your argument that by lessening your numerical benchmark, it diminishes democracy. Could we conclude logically then that with the new federal riding boundaries for Canada as a whole — it will go to about 295. Would you argue then and say that the federal Parliament will be more democratic than the provincial parliaments or the Ontario Parliament simply because it will have more members?

Ms Pollonetsky: That's an interesting question. At the same time you're talking about what the changes are to the federal Parliament, the only thing I can say to that is that Ontario, as the largest province in population in this country and a very diverse population at that — one of the honourable members mentioned that municipal government is the level that citizens are closest to. I would like to see the provincial government also being a level that people feel comfortable —

Mr Hastings: Yes, but on the democracy level, you'd say the federal Parliament by its sheer numbers would be more democratic than the provincial Legislature at 130 or even 103, on a logical basis. Increased numbers of politicians means more democracy, greater accessibility etc?

Ms Pollonetsky: It can. Certainly if there's adequate funding at the levels, that would mean the constituencies are adequately and properly staffed.

Mr Hastings: I have to deal with a number of constituent concerns, like all our colleagues here. You would see no linkage between the inability, the almost indifferent response of bureaucracy itself, whether it's the WCB or MTO or family benefits, to deal with the issues.

If you just have more people, more reps — I have three people in my office and volunteers, so if I had eight people in my office, I'd get faster responses basically, regardless of the number of politicians. You would argue that the more staff you have, the greater responses you'll get back from the bureaucracy. I find it completely the opposite, whatever the level of government. The nature of bureaucracy itself inhibits customer response in most instances, because it's not interested. "I'll get to it when I get to it." There's no urgency.

Ms Pollonetsky: I choose not to think of myself as a customer.

Mr Hastings: You don't.

Ms Pollonetsky: I choose to think of myself as a citizen who has legitimate concerns in whatever areas

they are. I am not a customer. I am not buying something. I have a Parliament that represents me and makes intelligent, informed decisions on behalf of me and what I vote for and what I stand for.

Mr Hastings: Well, I am thankful for your viewpoint.

Mrs Ross: Ms Pollonetsky, you are active in your community, you say, and no doubt you've contacted your local MPP. Have you been served through his constituency assistants or do you always speak directly to your representative?

Ms Pollonetsky: It's interesting. Yes, it's a male representative whom I deal with. I have not dealt directly with my elected representative very often. I have been well served by working through the constituency office when it's questions that are of concern. As I mentioned, there are some things that I would rather not have dealt with right away, like my son's birth certificate.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Pollonetsky. Be assured, as somebody who has had three children go through that driver's licence process, you will survive it eventually.

Ms Pollonetsky: And I will get the birth certificate replaced?

The Chair: Unfortunately, you will get the birth certificate, yes.

Mr Marchese: Call an MPP's office.

Ms Pollonetsky: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We do appreciate your input here this morning.

BRIAN COBURN

The Chair: Our next presenter is Brian Coburn, who is the mayor of Cumberland. Good morning, Mr Coburn, and welcome to our committee. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Brian Coburn: Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to address the committee.

Some of you may not know that the municipality of Cumberland is within the region of Ottawa-Carleton. At present, our MPP is Jean-Marc Lalonde. All of Cumberland is lumped into Prescott-Russell, which is an area outside of the region. We have some similarities but they are gradually disappearing because we're being assimilated into the larger urban core.

The federal boundaries create some confusion. I've got Don Boudria on one side in the middle of the municipality. He's our rep on one side, and on the other side, in the larger urban sector, is Eugène Bellemare. If you're going to follow the federal boundaries, you're going to add to the confusion in our community.

I checked this morning with Mr Bellemare's office. With the realignment of the federal boundaries, the population that he is looking after goes from about 100,000 down to about 80,000. The balance of Cumberland, which Mr Boudria represents, if you added it into the provincial boundary, is about another 12,000 people. I don't think that's an onerous load to put on a provincial representative. For the sake of continuity, consistency and likeness of issues, I would ask that the committee consider not following the federal boundary there and including Cumberland into that riding, which is all within Ottawa-Carleton. It is not a significant increase in population as well and it's all confined within about I

guess a 10-mile radius, the area that's outside of the one federal riding. I should have brought a map. Maybe it would have been a little clearer.

1100

Mr Patten: We have a flip chart for you.

Mr Coburn: Have you? I can go into that too if you like. I think the point here, given the movement of responsibilities down to the lower-tier level and the confusion, is that all of this is an attempt to avoid confusion or make it simpler for people to get answers. I don't think in this case the federal ridings do make it simpler. It should have included all of Cumberland into one riding, either one boundary or the other. That's basically my concern.

I do support the reduction in members at Queen's Park and I do support a lot of the initiatives that are taking place. It puts the responsibilities back to the lower tier, and that's where they should be.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Coburn. We've got five minutes or so for questions, beginning with the New Democrats.

Mr Marchese: Mr Coburn, we had Mr Cullen here and he made some very good points about redistribution and aligning ourselves with the federal boundaries. He used the word "abdication" of our own responsibilities, simply to say: "The federal government has done this. Why don't we simply adopt their boundaries? It's a lot easier." But it doesn't take into account what you just said.

What you just said is, "Please, in my case, don't do what you're about to do in terms of making the boundary contiguous with the federal one, but change it so as to fit the needs of that particular community." I'm not sure we could do that and make exceptions as we go along. If we're to take their line, we should simply go with one model because it's a lot easier.

But you raise a good problem and a good point: How do we take into account our own needs, which may be provincial, which may reflect municipal problems as well? Isn't that a particular problem? Are you not arguing that we should do our own redistribution as is fitting of our own needs and areas rather than adopting a federal model of boundaries that may not reflect what you have just raised?

Mr Coburn: I guess where I'm coming from is that the one-shoe-fits-all theory doesn't always apply.

Mr Marchese: I agree.

Mr Coburn: Reducing the number of politicians, number one, I do support that. I don't know, I haven't studied this boundary issue, but possibly in 95% of the cases the boundaries do work. But I am saying to have some common sense when it comes to alignment in respect of jurisdictions. The region of Ottawa-Carleton and its governance is somewhat different than Prescott-Russell, which is a county structure and which is changing drastically as well.

Mr Marchese: Mr Coburn, I'm agreeing with that and I'm suggesting to you that there will be other ridings that would come and make a similar case. Then this government has a problem, because if it makes one exception, it will have to make many, because many will argue, like you, "We are unique here." I know you generalize and

say 90% are likely to fit in that model, but I'm not entirely sure.

Anyway, you make the point that you agree with the reduction of politicians.

Mr Coburn: I guess the point I'm making is that the feds aren't right on this one.

Mr Marchese: I understand. I'm arguing the provincial Tories aren't right on this one either. They've changed the process here. From 1962 onwards, we've had commissions dealing with this issue to remove it from the political arm, where they decide they're going to take leadership and just chop out politicians because the people out there like it, as opposed to a commission that says: "We're not sure we're just going to be bullied by a public that says they want to eliminate politicians. We're going to look at this a little more reasonably, possibly intelligently, but removed from the political kind of influence." That's what we've done since 1962. I happen to think that's a good process. They've changed that.

Do you believe we should now be going to a model that says, "Whoever's in power is simply going to do it by fiat and that's the way it's going to be"? Is that what you are agreeing to or proposing perhaps?

Mr Coburn: I've been kicking around politics for about 16 years, with a little bit of success. I believe that on election day, if I'm the guy elected, I'm there to make decisions and boogie along.

Mr Marchese: Well, they're sure boogieing, I can tell you that. Mr Hastings boogies every day in the House.

I have a problem with that, I really do, because I believe there are many times when, yes, you have the majority as a government, or you as a mayor, to be able to make some decisions, but there are times when you have to remove yourselves from how things are done so as to at least give the appearance that there's a process here, a democratic one and an objective one, where people are actually commenting in a way that is removed from the rest of us. I think that's a very useful process, by the way.

Do you really believe that if we get rid of 27 politicians, somehow we're going to be more efficient in our ability to do our job both in the north where geographic distances are enormous and in the south where we have a variety of different communities that make it very hard from time to time for us to be able to service them as we would like? Do you believe we can do it more efficiently?

Mr Coburn: It's a little more complicated than that or a little more extended than that. There's a whole mindset that has to be changed in our public. You've stuck your hand out for the last 20 years and somebody's put something in it. That mindset has to change. We can't continue to be able to satisfy everybody's need. That's the perception that's held today in the public, that we as politicians go through a process and there are some very lengthy processes now that involve the public extensively. That process, in its efforts to serve and be fair and open, also leaves the public with the belief that each and every one of them will be satisfied when it's over. It's not happening. It can't happen.

I've had the experience of going through a few of them over the years. Make no mistake: Our public in

Cumberland is not left with the perception that everybody's going to be happy. We'll make the decision that we think best serves our community. That's all I'm appealing for here: a decision that will probably best serve, in my view, future decisions at the political level and ease of access into the upper tiers.

Mr Stewart: Just a couple of questions. You were talking about the confusion if the boundaries stay with the federal reps. Is the confusion that your provincial person now is part of Cumberland and Prescott-Russell or is the confusion because you've got two federal members representing the town, or whatever it is, of Cumberland? Is that the confusion?

Mr Coburn: The confusion is because, yes, at the federal level there are two. Who do you call? If one is in the limelight this week in the press and it says he's representing Cumberland, then people think he represents all of Cumberland. If you use that same line, then I've got two provincial representatives representing Cumberland. It will create similar confusion.

Mr Stewart: But if they do go to the federal ridings, if we follow the same federal ridings which we're proposing, could that not possibly cut down the confusion? Then they know that those two gentlemen or whatever, those areas represent both federal and provincial boundaries. Do you think it could help? Because now you're doing three, and you could be two. I guess that's what I'm saying.

Mr Coburn: Well, there's lots of confusion in society today.

Mr Stewart: There is indeed.

Mr Coburn: You can rationalize anything. I just think it's much simpler if I've got one phone number on the wall, as a resident, one provincial.

Mr Stewart: I've no problem agreeing with you. I guess I'm a bit of an old politician too in the municipal end.

Back about three years ago when the federal commission was going around with a proposal of making some changes in the federal boundaries, I assume you probably made a proposal then on this issue.

Mr Coburn: No.

Mr Stewart: Did anybody make that comment to them that they should look at that particular area then?

Mr Coburn: I believe it was made to them, yes. I'm up to my ass in alligators in a whole bunch of other things, so —

Mr Stewart: You didn't need that.

Mr Coburn: No.

Mr Stewart: I just wondered, because they did go around. I made a presentation to them myself on an area. I just wondered whether it had been done and what their thoughts were on it.

Mr Coburn: I believe it was made, but I didn't.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Coburn, it's good to see you again. We appreciate your coming forward here. Mr Stewart just asked the first part of the question I was going to ask about whether or not representations had been made to the federal commission. You're undoubtedly familiar with the process they go through.

I know the comments made by Mr Marchese would suggest that he wanted another commission, an exact

duplicate commission, because presumably the federal non-partisan boundary commission — these weren't MPs, these were people appointed — takes into account geography, population, ethnic diversity, natural barriers, whether there are rivers and islands involved and that sort of thing.

Were there hearings in Ottawa, or at least to the best of your knowledge were there people in this region who gave that kind of input to the federal boundary commission? If you don't know that, do you have any reason to believe that they did not balance all of those factors and would have come to exactly the same conclusion that a group of provincially appointed people would have done if they had asked the same questions?

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Mr Coburn: I don't know, because everybody — I guess you have your beliefs for different things. I'm strictly looking at governmental boundaries. That's all I'm looking at.

Mr Gilchrist: And that's all they looked at when they crafted them. But would a provincial group of appointees get the same answer if they had come to talk to you? If the feds talked to you or the provincial people talked, would they get the same answer from you?

Mr Coburn: Yes.

Mr Gilchrist: Okay. So presumably they would have crafted the boundary the same way, based on the input from all the people. Would you agree with that?

Mr Coburn: I don't know because I don't know if everybody would argue from the same point. You know, members of your public don't see things — you wake up in the morning and you see it differently this morning than you did yesterday morning. When you're in the business of politics and you get the complaints coming at you, there are some similarities in the complaints. The public doesn't generally recognize those similarities, and for various reasons. I don't know if I can make a broad-blanket statement that the public in this Cumberland-Gloucester riding would agree.

Mr Gilchrist: Fair enough.

Mr Grandmaître: Good morning, Brian. I understand exactly what you mean with two federal members and one MPP, and maybe two MPPs, because Mr Morin is very close to your riding. But I think the biggest problem is that we have to satisfy so many mayors. In my own riding, I have to satisfy three mayors and a regional chair. How can I satisfy three mayors and a regional chair? Brian, you're talking about less confusion. I want to suggest to you a way that would resolve this confusion. Let's have one-tier government in Ottawa-Carleton, and that would resolve the confusion, right? You're in favour of one-tier government?

Mr Coburn: I'm in favour of one level of government.

Mr Grandmaître: You're in favour of one-tier government?

Mr Coburn: But your interpretation of one-tier may not be quite the same as mine.

Mr Grandmaître: Well, can I take 30 seconds of your time? Tell me what your definition of one-tier government is all about.

Mr Coburn: One level of government. I believe —

Mr Grandmaître: With how many municipalities?

Mr Coburn: You could have one; you could have three. But it all —

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you.

Mr Coburn: Okay. You wanted me to tell you about it and then you cut me off.

Mr Grandmaître: No, no. I'm sorry. I didn't cut you off. I wanted to pass on. Carry on then. I'm sorry. I wouldn't insult a mayor for all the money in the world.

Mr Coburn: I don't take it as an insult at all. I think what the public is saying is, "My God, I don't know who to call." I get the calls.

Mr Grandmaître: I know.

Mr Coburn: I'm the guy who's the closest to the people in Cumberland, as are a lot of the other mayors in respect to municipalities. I get the calls. There is confusion. They're not willing to listen. Their day is full. It's hustle and bustle getting from one end of the day to the other. They say to me: "Hey, Coburn, I don't give a damn who's picking up the garbage. I send my taxes to you, so I only want to talk to you."

There are a lot of these things that don't have to be handled by politicians. They can be handled by commissions and things. To figure out the size of a water-sewer pipe, you don't need a politician to do that. You can have a master plan of the region. That can be handled by commissions. You don't need politicians to do everything.

You're all in the political business. Is it not important that when a resident calls you, you're the guy — "guy" is politically correct, by the way; they told me that the other day — who cuts the red tape? By God, I'm not going to leave the running of my community or the province to bureaucrats. We'll sink the ship in record-breaking time. That's the biggest part of my job day in and day out, and that's what makes it so interesting, that diversification from one end of the day to the other. It may be dogs today; it may be a row with the neighbour tomorrow. It could be just an accident on the corner.

Mr Grandmaître: Brian, you just made a very, very important comment. Politicians are supposed to get our people through red tape. If that's one of our responsibilities, having fewer politicians will not decrease the red tape. Right?

Mr Coburn: You know, for some people it takes an hour to do a job and for some of them it takes them a whole damn day.

Mr Grandmaître: If you oppose it.

Mr Coburn: There are some good politicians and there are some duds. The public, in my estimation, sometimes is misguided when they —

Interjection.

Mr Coburn: Either that or — I don't know. I don't know how you get better politicians. But you know, some people are very dedicated and interested in really doing a good job. There are others who tend to float through and just hit the crests.

Mr Grandmaître: Right. Thank you.

Mr Hampton: Is there any time remaining?

The Chair: Mr Patten, did you have a question?

Mr Patten: Go ahead. I'll pass.

Mr Hampton: I've been listening to your comments and I want to ask your views on this. What I see happening with the Harris government is that you're seeing the creation of larger Toronto-centred bureaucrats. You're actually seeing services and offices being pulled out of communities and centralized in Toronto. I think what's being created here is a larger, nameless, faceless bureaucracy and that there will be fewer elected people to hold it accountable, to ask the tough questions, fewer people to be able to say: "No, you're not going to do that. You're not going to affect people in my part of the province this way." That's my sense of it. You're going to see a more centralized, more remote, faceless, nameless bureaucracy and you're going to have fewer elected people there to ask the questions to hold it accountable. I just wonder what your response to that is.

Mr Coburn: I think, Mr Hampton, some of the observations I've made and what I get from some of my residents when they watch Queen's Park in action is more to the point of: "Why can't people agree on something that's good instead of taking party lines? Because that's your job."

Mr Sergio: You're taking the fun away.

Mr Coburn: I don't limit that to Queen's Park. You can look at the playpen up here on the Hill — same thing. Everybody is posturing, trying to score political points, and the public now is becoming a little more astute, and I don't think those tactics are scoring as many points any more. They're saying: "My God, will you just get on with it so that it'll help me get from one end of the day to the other. When I call, cut the crap and give me the answer." It doesn't always have to be the answer you expect to hear. It has to be the right answer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Coburn. We appreciate your coming today and giving us your input.

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COUNTY OF GLENGARRY

The Chair: Our next presenters are George Currier, the reeve of Maxville, and Jean-Marc Lefebvre, Basil Dawley and Wyman Barton. Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mr George Currier: Good morning. I'm George Currier from the village of Maxville. Our submission today is from Glengarry county, where Glengarry county will be separated with the new boundary changes. We're strictly against it and we hope the committee here will really listen to what we have to say and use good judgement. On my left is Jean-Marc Lefebvre from Alexandria; next to him is Wyman Barton, deputy reeve of Winchester township; and to my right is Basil Dawley. Our presentation will be made by Jean-Marc Lefebvre.

Mr Jean-Marc Lefebvre: I would say at the outset that George has been past warden for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and is current reeve of Glengarry. He's been there as reeve for as long as I can remember. Basil Dawley's foray into politics started in 1946, with the municipal election in Winchester. Wyman is also involved in the municipal field. I have an interest in it simply as a pleasure. I have never been elected, so I do not have the pleasure of having the support of anyone other than myself.

I would like to address the issue by referring to various documents, including Bill 81 itself. I would like particularly to deal with subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the Representation Act. I would also like to refer to the Twenty-first Annual Report of the Commission on Election Finances and will be extrapolating some figures from that report for the year 1995.

At the outset I'd like to say that the situation for Glengarry is somewhat unique. To that extent we feel that the province of Ontario should deal with us in a special manner. The provincial boundaries for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry should not be changed to remove Glengarry from the historic union of the united counties for several reasons. The present union of Glengarry with Stormont and Dundas, as it is today, serves to represent the people and interests of Glengarry fairly. We ask you to consider our proposal for the new boundaries, which would be to include the city of Cornwall with S-D-G. This proposal allows for equal representation considering the possible number of electors. I will deal with that by addressing the matter from the report I mentioned previously. Financially it is cost-effective to reduce the number of seats in the provincial Legislature, and it maintains the historic creation of our united counties, which were joined together in 1850.

If we include Glengarry in the new proposed riding of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, including the city of Cornwall, we have 34,199 people in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and 44,191 people in Cornwall and Charlottenburgh township, for a total of 78,390 eligible voters. I will be giving specifics on these figures later. This compares favourably with the existing riding of Prescott and Russell, which has a total of 79,574 eligible voters, so we're within 1,000 electors.

With the present provincial boundaries, Glengarry is part of S-D-G. This represents one seat in the Legislative Assembly. The city of Cornwall and the township of Charlottenburgh, which are part of Glengarry, also represent one seat. All persons would be equally served if Cornwall and Charlottenburgh were to join with S-D-G. Not only would we be joining with an area that has been politically, historically and culturally linked since the first settlers landed on the banks of the St Lawrence River in what came to be Upper Canada in the early 1700s, but this new form of provincial riding would also reduce the number of seats in the Legislature by one, and that's the purpose everyone wants to achieve: reducing. This would thus provide a more cost-effective government.

Removing Glengarry from the united counties achieves no profitable goal for the province, the county or the people. The people of Glengarry share many interests with their neighbours in the counties to the west. There's a natural communication with Charlottenburgh as part of Glengarry. Geographically it is a natural union to incorporate all of Glengarry in the united counties with the city of Cornwall. Just as Alexandria is the pulse of Glengarry, Cornwall serves as the economic, social and educational centre of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Adopting a federal boundary for no tangible reason makes little sense when one considers that our municipal government is the backbone of our provincial govern-

ment. Therefore, why should we just adopt a federal boundary that has little relevance to us politically, culturally and historically? Historically Glengarry has been part of the united counties since the mid-1800s. The first settlers to Upper Canada landed on the banks of the St Lawrence and established this region. That's history, this is our past and that is what developed our identity, which is historically significant in Ontario and in Canada.

These are not only political boundaries we're fighting for; these are historical boundaries upon which Canada was developed. From Glengarry, explorers and map makers like David Thompson, Simon Fraser and Caribou Cameron explored and opened up the west. The heritage of our future generations depends upon preserving what has been established.

To take Glengarry away from its rightful place in the united counties is irresponsible. The natural flow of life in Glengarry is east and west, not north and south. For over 200 years the development of Glengarry has been tied up with the development of Cornwall, Stormont and Dundas. We have established beneficial working partnerships in education, finance, sports, agriculture and health care with our sister counties that have taken years to become successful. We can't afford to lose them.

The winter of 1908 marked the defeat of the last Glengarry separation movement. Ninety years ago Glengarrians fought to prevent its separation from the united counties, and today we are here to ask you to join with Glengarrians to oppose another separation movement. This is the repetition of history, and when I say "repetition of history," I say this is good. It means that we're on the right track. It means that what happened in 1908 has to be repeated in 1996 and that the movement for separation has to be rejected. There's a string in history, and this string should not be broken.

Glengarry, as part of the three united counties, has been part of our grandparents' heritage, our parents' heritage and our heritage. Let it continue to be a part of our children's heritage.

I want to address the matter by referring to enumeration figures because I mentioned these enumeration figures before. The Twenty-first Annual Report of the Commission on Election Finances for the Year 1995 is an accurate reflection of the number of voters in current ridings in 1995. It is based on a census conducted by enumerators during 1995 for the 1995 summer election. The figures contained therein with respect to numbers of voters are the most accurate available in Ontario, provincially or federally. Federal figures date back to the 1991 national census and the enumeration which was conducted by the federal government immediately before the last federal election, therefore those figures are out of date. I know that the federal government will be conducting new enumerations, but as we stand today it is my submission that the figures are not current.

On pages 32 and 33 of the Ontario report of the Commission on Election Finances the Cornwall riding, which includes Charlottenburgh township, is shown as having 44,191 eligible voters. On pages 48 and 49 of the report S-D-G & East Grenville — this does not include Charlottenburgh township — is shown as having 47,066 eligible voters.

We know that East Grenville has 27.38% of the riding and we understand that East Grenville is pleased to join up with its neighbour to the west. No problem. Dundas has 32.49% of the voters, which is 15,291 voters — I have 15,291.74 here because of the percentage; Stormont has 16.85% of the voters, and this translates into 7,930 voters; and Glengarry has 23.28% of the voters. This means that in Glengarry there are 10,956.96 voters, if we use the figure as percentage, for a grand total of 34,199 voters. If you put Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry together with Cornwall and Charlottenburgh township we have a grand total of 78,390 voters.

If you turn to pages 44 and 45 of this Commission on Election Finances annual report for 1995, we note that the existing boundaries of Prescott and Russell, as of 1995, show that there are 79,574 eligible voters. We're talking 1,000 people. We're not talking a large difference, we're talking a very minor difference.

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It is our suggestion that Glengarry be included with Stormont and Dundas and Cornwall and Charlottenburgh township, and it is our submission that in order to achieve this — and I think this will fall into the previous speaker's suggestion — Prescott and Russell should remain the way it was before, and that the numbers that were suggested to be taken out by the new federal riding redistribution boundaries be ignored and that Prescott and Russell stay the way it was, and that Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Cornwall and Charlottenburgh be put together.

I have studied the matter a little further and I believe that a great saving in dollars can be achieved by adopting many of the federal procedures and much of what's been done by the federal government and much of what will be done in the future by the federal government. The savings will be in millions of dollars. But we have to understand that the whole basis of these enumerations is not on the basis of the large riding as such but is on the basis of enumeration within polls. So the enumeration is conducted and is divided within polls. The electors in each poll are established by the enumeration conducted in anticipation of an election. So the anticipated saving of dollars by using federal figures can be achieved without adopting the new federal riding boundaries.

The new boundaries do not change the polls, and the same polls can be used federally and provincially by merely extrapolating the electoral votes produced by the enumeration of the voters entitled to cast a ballot and slotting them in their selected riding boundaries without having to adopt the federal boundaries as far as Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Cornwall and Charlottenburgh are concerned. The same would apply for the riding of Prescott and Russell. The names of the people are slotted in the poll and the numbers are slotted in the poll, and it's a very simple matter to simply extrapolate that poll and say this belongs to Prescott and Russell.

Now I want to address the question of the bill itself, and I'm dealing with Bill 81, and I'm concerned with respect to the wording of the title of the bill. The title of the act, Bill 81, includes wording that is too wide and too restrictive having regard to the obligation of the province to safeguard the integrity of provincial jurisdiction. The wording, as presently constituted, involves abdication of

the province of Ontario government's right and duty of self-determination. The effect of the legislation is to submit the province to being manipulated and to being dictated to by the federal government. Let there be no mistake about that. There is no mechanism within Bill 81 to protect the province from federal manipulation. There is no consultation process spelled out whereby the province can exercise a right of veto with respect to riding boundaries, and this constitutes a foolhardy abdication of Ontario's right of self-determination.

In the title the word "identical" is used. They're talking about boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of the federal counterparts. If you look at the schedule to the Representation Act, at subsection 2(1), we see again the word "identical" to those of its federal electoral districts. I suggest that the word "identical" in the title should be deleted, and it should be replaced by the following words, "similar to those of their federal counterparts to the extent that it suits the Legislature of the province of Ontario." That's what I suggest. So the title would now read — it's a very slight amendment but it makes a world of difference: An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts similar to those of their federal counterparts to the extent that it suits the Legislature of the province of Ontario and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation.

Similarly, those words and practically a repetition would be substituted for the word "identical" at subsection 2(1) of the schedule.

Of course, the specific sections of the act would have to be amended to provide for the ability of the province to deviate from strict compliance with proposed federal riding boundaries where it makes sense to do so. It's my suggestion that in this case it makes sense to do so. That's, I suppose, the purpose of this commission today, to determine how this bill can be improved.

The Chair: Just to let you know, sir, you're down to your last minute and a half or so.

Mr Lefebvre: Thank you. The guiding factor would have to be enhancing provincial savings by use of the federal poll enumeration figures and names. The cost of extrapolating the figures and adapting them to those ridings in need of provincial recognition as significantly different from the federal boundaries would be very minimal and certainly it would be an appropriate small expenditure in safeguarding provincial integrity in matters of self-government and the election of the members of the Ontario Legislature.

The Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen. We appreciate your input here this morning. You've effectively used up your 20 minutes so there's no time for any questions, but we do appreciate your input. Thanks very much.

Mr Patten: Perhaps we might ask if you have a copy of your presentation that you could share with the committee.

Mr Lefebvre: Yes, we have 10 copies actually.

Mr Currier: Okay. Thank you, Mr Chair. If anyone wants to ask us questions, we'll be hanging around.

The Chair: Okay. Maybe you can buy lunch.

TREVOR TOLLEY

The Chair: Our next presenter is Professor A.T. Tolley. Good morning, sir. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Trevor Tolley: Thank you. Can everybody hear me? I should first of all like to introduce myself. I'm Professor Trevor Tolley, a resident of Williamsburg township in the present provincial riding of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville. I'm a former municipal councillor, having served two terms on Williamsburg township council. I came close to being elected deputy reeve in the last election. I'm also president of the Williamsburg Non-Profit Housing Corp and past president and vice-president of Dundas County Community Living.

I think, therefore, that I have a good basis for understanding the feelings of my fellow residents concerning the changes in riding boundaries. I believe that most of the members of Williamsburg council would echo my views. I would cite the views expressed to me by a prominent member of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture who lives in Williamsburg, the view that the things he is most afraid of in what the present government of Ontario proposes are municipal amalgamation and the realignment of the boundaries of provincial ridings.

1140

I'm addressing the proposal that the boundaries of provincial ridings should be the same as those of federal ridings. I would first of all express a personal view, which is that the proposed changes and the arguments for them are misguided. The size of the federal ridings reflects the need to keep the House of Commons at a manageable level, where it is an effective body for debate and representation. Such a need does not in my view exist at the provincial level, even in so large a province as Ontario. The size of the Legislature is very manageable. This and the best size for effective representation should be the paramount criteria in considering any change. Saving dollars that are a minor percentage of the provincial budget in a matter so crucial to democracy in Ontario seems to me to be an example of the proverbial tail wagging the dog.

I would like to turn now to local considerations. I shall begin by looking at the municipal structure of the region. We have two tiers of government within the region: township councils at the lower level and the council of the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry at the upper level. While there may be amalgamation at the lower level, the counties council will remain in place. The united counties are almost identical with the riding of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, the exceptions being Charlottenburgh township, which is in the Cornwall provincial riding, and East Grenville, which is not in the united counties. However, the united counties do not include the city of Cornwall, but the city of Cornwall is part of the federal riding of Stormont-Dundas, the boundaries of which, it is proposed, will be the boundaries of the new provincial riding. In addition, the proposed new provincial riding would include only the counties of Stormont and Dundas, plus one township from Glengarry, Charlottenburgh. There would thus be a new dissonance created between the municipal and

provincial areas of governmental representation, a dissonance that does not exist at the moment.

This might not seem devastating, but the present municipal separation reflects important differences and also protects the rural areas. Cornwall is a mill town that originally emerged as a centre for utilizing wood from the surrounding region. Wood-based products are still the main industry of Cornwall, even though Courtaulds and other spinners have gone. Domtar remains, and without it Cornwall would hardly survive. The wood in the surrounding area has long since disappeared and logs are brought in from far afield. Cornwall, additionally, and indeed in this way, is in no way a centre for the agricultural activities of the surrounding counties.

There is hence no community of economic interest between Cornwall and the counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, which are largely agricultural. Their largest urban area is the village of Alexandria, with just over 3,000 people. The present arrangement of boundaries ensures that the special interests of these rural areas are well and clearly represented at Queen's Park. They are in fact represented by the present Minister of Agriculture for Ontario.

If we look at the population distribution of the proposed new riding, we see that it would contain the present Cornwall provincial riding plus three townships from the county of Stormont and the whole of the county of Dundas. The population of the present Cornwall riding is slightly larger, I believe, than the population of the entire riding of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville. The present Cornwall riding would remain intact and its population would be far greater than the population of the remainder of the new riding, which would be that of only seven of the 13 townships that make up the present riding of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville.

The voting power would be in Cornwall, and it would seem inevitable that the representative would come from the city of Cornwall. This has always been the case for the present federal riding of Stormont-Dundas. In view of the fact that the concerns and interests of the city of Cornwall are so divorced from those of what would be the remainder of the new riding, the representation of the rural interests would be dramatically diminished.

My position is in keeping with a motion moved by the honourable Noble Villeneuve in the provincial Legislature on 26 November 1992. I will read his motion:

"That, in the opinion of this House, when the next commission for the purpose of redistribution of Ontario electoral districts is established, the commission should be instructed to take into consideration the varying conditions, circumstances and requirements regarding representation as between rural and urban electoral districts, and the increase in geographic area of rural ridings after the redistribution of the 1970s and the 1980s, with the intention of creating three classifications of constituencies, urban, urban-rural, and rural, so as to limit the geographic area of rural ridings, and to a lesser degree that of urban-rural ridings, as well as the number of organized municipalities which members must represent."

Noble Villeneuve is the member for Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville. He is Minister of Agricul-

ture in the present government of Ontario. His motion was passed in the House with supporting speeches from both sides of the House. I trust that the committee has been alerted to this motion of 1992.

Interjection.

Mr Tolley: I'm very pleased to hear that. Sorry to have taken up your time.

I trust the committee has been alerted to his motion. I then come back to my original position, that the proposed changes are misguided and will lead to a diminution in the representation afforded to the inhabitants of the rural areas. I urge the committee to take careful note of this and of the supporting facts I have adduced. I am in favour of the status quo, concerning which I more or less spoke at the meeting I think 10 years ago. The boundaries which were adopted were the boundaries that I suggested; it doesn't follow that they were adopted because I suggested them.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We've got about three minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the government.

Mr Maves: Thank you very much, Professor Tolley. I wasn't here for the first few minutes. You are a professor of what? I just missed —

Mr Tolley: I'm a retired professor from Carleton University, a professor of English and comparative literature and the former dean of arts at Carleton.

Mr Maves: I understand that you and the gentleman before you have problems with the way the boundaries have been divided for your area and that there are different interests within your riding as it's going to sit, but that's the case for most ridings. I'm the member for Niagara Falls. To the south of me Tim Hudak has a riding which has Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Fort Erie and Port Colborne often have different interests, and I would assume that there are all these types of differences in each and every riding. I would suggest that to divide up all of the ridings across Ontario and across Canada simply on that matter would make for an extremely difficult exercise, number one.

Number two, I can understand that you have a keen interest in this and I just wondered, when the federal commission went around the province taking submissions on the redrawing of the boundaries, did you present at that time?

Mr Tolley: No, I didn't.

Mr Gilchrist: Just as a follow-up to that, Professor, part of our problem in this is in May 1994, when we articulated our policy planks and our election campaign commitments, one of them was to mirror the federal boundaries. I hasten to say that in May 1994 there were no draft maps. There could be no accusation of gerrymandering by our government or by our party at that time, because there was no vision of what this non-partisan federally appointed commission would decide, based on the representations they heard. They did in fact go around the province, a number of hearings, including three in the north, and they had one in Nepean, down in this neck of the woods. Based on those submissions, they crafted these boundaries.

The flip side of that is by June 8, 1995, they did have draft maps available, and every member who stood for

election to the current Parliament had the opportunity to obtain a copy of that map and know that if we were elected and if we were serious about keeping our promise, that would be the boundary for the subsequent election. But they also knew something else. The federal government was still entertaining amendments to that draft, and for seven more months people had an opportunity to call up their MP or to call the boundary commission directly. I guess our frustration, particularly from members opposite, is that those who took no time to make presentations before the federal commission and yet who knew we were about to mirror what it did are now asking us to change it, when the horse has already bolted. I guess I'm just curious to know whether — and I want to be quite fair — it ever came to your attention that the federal government was doing a redistribution.

Mr Tolley: I have a map of it and I have no quarrel with it as a federal riding, no quarrel at all. What I have a quarrel with is making that the provincial riding.

Mr Patten: Professor Tolley, thank you for coming today. I find your presentation fascinating and interesting, and I think you make very compelling arguments, one of which is of course — and it's been identified before, but it's important to restate — that the province does abdicate its responsibility to the federal government and there are different needs at different levels; otherwise, why have different jurisdictions.

1150

The second is that there is no mechanism — you've identified this and I'd like you to elaborate on what you would suggest would be a mechanism so that there is some flexibility. My personal opinion is that, I don't care what the jurisdiction is, you've got to have the flexibilities of the variances and the uniquenesses throughout your jurisdiction, no matter how large or small it may be. In this particular situation — and there was a recommendation from the presenters just before you which I thought was a sound recommendation — from your point of view, what would be a mechanism — obviously the government wants to proceed with this — to allow for the sort of flexibility and still get some of the benefits of aligning themselves with the federal ridings?

Mr Tolley: I find that a rather difficult question to answer as a general question. Certainly within our riding it's difficult to see how such an arrangement could be made for the proposed riding because I feel myself that there is, from my own experience in dealing with Cornwall and our riding, a tremendous cultural gap between Cornwall and us. I suppose that is what I was speaking to. I'm sorry I can't answer you more fully.

Mr Patten: I meant in terms of legislation; there is nothing in the legislation that allows for any flexibility, but still to — as they suggest, there is some cost saving by adopting the federal system because they will have done all the work and paid all the expenses and the province won't have to pay for that and they can do that.

The presenters just before you suggested, however, you still can have 95% of those benefits but show some flexibility and ensure yourself your authority and don't abdicate your authority to the federal government at this point, which is kind of an irony because usually the feds are the bad guys around here, you know.

Mr Tolley: I heard the latter part of that presentation and I was sympathetic to it.

Mr Hampton: Thank you very much, Professor Tolley. When I listen to the Conservative members argue in favour of this bill, one of the arguments I hear often is: "What you really need is a representation strictly by population, so that representation in a democracy is strictly a numbers game. You add up the total population and you divide it by a certain number and you then achieve democracy." I wanted to ask you: What do you think of that concept in terms of democracy and in terms of representation and in terms of balance?

Mr Tolley: I would say of course that has to be the starting point for consideration. Obviously one wouldn't like to see a situation where a small number of people were electing a member and in another riding two or three times the number were electing a member. On the other hand, it seems to me that for ridings which are geographically spread out there must be consideration of the geographical size, there must be consideration of the number of municipal jurisdictions within that riding, and many other considerations. These considerations certainly apply to Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. As I said myself in the beginning of my presentation, it seems to me that arranging things so that we save money is the tail wagging the dog, and going for uniformity without consideration of local needs and consideration of the geographical concerns that I've spoken of too is misguided.

Mr Hampton: One of the issues that the government puts forward is they say this is going to save money, yet recently in the press there have been a number of op ed pieces by people who've spent a fair amount of time studying democracy who point out that you're not going to find much here in the way of saving money; this may in fact cost more.

Given where you're from, in rural Ontario, do you have a sense of the kind of telephone lines or the variety of fax machines or in fact the kind of constituency staff that would be required to deal with municipalities, to deal with boards of education, to deal with federations of agriculture, to deal with — as I gather, there are two major linguistic groups in the constituency? Do you have a sense of that, if people are to have adequate representation and people are to have a sense of being in contact with their representative? Do you have a sense of that?

Mr Tolley: I think there is a great cost involved. Of course, within the city of Cornwall there would be a much greater ease of communication, much less dependence upon the facilities for communication than there would be within the remainder of the proposed riding and it seems to me that this too would put the people of Cornwall at an advantage, the immediacy that they might have to their representative.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor Tolley. We appreciate your input here this morning.

Mr Tolley: It's been a pleasure. Thank you.

The Chair: So that we do not affect the short hour we have for lunch, the suggestion has been made that we continue our discussion on our issue at 3 o'clock. We have a break at 3 o'clock. Everybody in agreement with that? We recess until 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1158 to 1300.

KATE THORNE

The Chair: Our first presenter this afternoon is Kate Thorne. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mrs Kate Thorne: Good afternoon, Mr Chairman, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you on the subject of Bill 81. I've never done this before, so please bear with me. I'll be quite brief. I don't think I have 20 minutes worth, so I certainly would welcome questions.

As the Chair said, my name is Kate Thorne, and I'm a retiree from the library at Carleton University where I worked in government documents. In fact I was responsible for the Ontario documents so I'm very familiar with many of these names.

Mr Patten: You're doing better than us.

Mrs Marland: Actually the chatty ones, right?

Mr Baird: You wouldn't know me then.

Mrs Thorne: I understand that this act would reduce the number of MPPs by 27 to 103 members, resulting in less representation per person for the province, and I think this is a step in the wrong direction for several reasons.

The issues dealt with by MPPs are much closer to home for the average Ontarian than those concerning the federal MPs. Issues of health care, education, welfare, family issues, children's issues, labour issues, all these are day-to-day concerns with which people need help. In the urban areas I understand that constituency offices usually have four telephone lines that are constantly in use. Among others, there are floods of new citizens who need assistance and advocacy. In the rural areas, particularly in the north, already large ridings would now be enormous.

In the past more seats were allocated to large geographical areas on the basis of need to see. There are areas which don't have local TV news shows or local daily papers and where even a phone call to the constituency office could be a long distance call. So I think it's very important that these electors actually see their representatives on a regular basis, but with even bigger ridings, this will become more and more difficult. In general, I would say that federal ridings are not as logical as the present provincial ridings for Ontario because of the nature of the issues handled by the provincial Legislature.

On the issue of costs, I think the savings involved with 27 seats in the Legislature would be very minimal in a provincial budget of, I understand, about \$50 billion, when it's compared to the services that these MPPs deliver to their constituents. So I do feel that this bill will result in less resources being available to these people in need of help at a time when people need help more and more.

My last point is more personal. Speaking as someone with a great respect for our elected representatives and all their hard work and sacrifices, I find the short title of the bill to be subtly pejorative. The Fewer Politicians Act seems to be saying that the only good politician is a gone politician. It seems to be feeding into the perceived dislike of politicians by people who don't believe in government. It seems to encourage even more disenchant-

ment with legislatures, and I think it undermines democracy and we may find ourselves moving towards a society like that of the US where only 49% voted in Tuesday's presidential election.

I told you I was going to be really brief. Thank you very much for your attention. But I wonder if it would be in order to ask the committee a couple of questions.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist?

Mr Gilchrist: Sure, no problem.

The Chair: We have five minutes per caucus that we divide up. So when it comes around to the government's five minutes, you can feel free to ask them some questions.

Mr Baird: You can ask them some questions too.

Mr Gilchrist: Was it the government she meant?

The Chair: Yes. I presume your questions were of the government members.

Mrs Thorne: No. I wanted to ask all the committee members a couple of questions. I wanted to know how many new members there were in this committee.

Mr Sergio: How many new members?

Mrs Thorne: I mean new members of the Legislature since the last election. I wanted to ask you if you've changed your ideas about the importance of the role of an MPP and the need people have for personal representation.

The Chair: Do you want each person who's new to answer that?

Mrs Thorne: If it wouldn't be too —

The Chair: Okay. We'll start with Mr Stewart. Make these short answers.

Mr Stewart: I'm always short. No, I don't think it has. I was in municipal politics for 12 years and I think probably I was more involved with more issues at that level than I am now. I average about 60 to 70 calls a day. But if you have a good staff and a competent staff, they can assist you very much. With high-tech communications, whether it be 1-800 numbers or answering services, whatever, we can serve our people very well.

The one comment I would like to make is that unfortunately over the past number of years we have catered very highly to our constituents — past members have. I think we're now to a point where, as we cut down in dollars and have less dollars to spend, we've got to get away from that bias. People have to be prepared to start to do things for themselves, and they can very easily. Instead of my predecessor sending a birth certificate application form to Thunder Bay via courier when it wasn't necessarily an emergency, there's no reason they couldn't send it by a stamp, which they have paid for, on an envelope and cut down the cost for the government. So I think that we're much the same as what I've been used to in the past.

The Chair: Okay, Mrs Thorne, could you just have the question a little bit more precise so the answers could be a little bit more precise? We will end up here with about seven political speeches otherwise.

Mrs Thorne: Yes, okay.

The Chair: What was the question again?

Mrs Thorne: I said, "Have you changed your ideas about the importance of the role of an MPP and the need people have for personal representation?"

Mrs Ross: No, I haven't changed my opinion. I think the role of an MPP is to serve their constituents the best way they possibly can. I think the significance of that role is in the office of being an MPP, not necessarily with the personality in the office.

Mr Baird: I worked for a federal member of Parliament for six years, so I already had a very high regard for the importance of the role of a parliamentarian.

Mr Gilchrist: Like Mr Baird, I've been involved in the party for 25 years. My father was an elected official, and I helped craft the Common Sense Revolution as party president at the time. We went across this province and asked people about every promise in that book, including the one to mirror federal boundaries. Everything I've seen since the election just reinforces my belief that we're living up to those promises and that's exactly what the majority of people in this province wanted us to do.

Mr Maves: I too worked for a federal member before I ran and became a provincial member. When I worked for the federal member, we handled a lot of things that were actually quite day to day in people's lives: GST payroll, child tax credit, veterans' benefits, veterans' pensions, records, recognitions, Young Offenders Act, passports, visas, immigration, guaranteed income supplements, spouse's allowance, I can go on and on, all of which, contrary to your opening statement, were very significant in the daily lives of people as are some of the things we do as provincial members. So I have a great deal of respect for the roles and responsibilities of both provincial and federal members.

Mr Sergio: It hasn't. This is my first term as an MPP. Having served some 16½ or 17 years as a local councillor, I get to appreciate more the responsibility that comes with the role of the MPP. If there's anything I have noticed that gives me something to think seriously about, it's future representation. As politicians, we are told: "If you don't like the heat in the kitchen, you can leave. Nobody forces you to run."

If you have people who are so willing and take the issues to heart, everyone who has run for election and has won and is doing a good job trying to represent the people, what we are seeing with our government may be a deterrent for some good candidates who may want to run for office in the future, and I think that is a disservice to our general community as well.

But no, it has not changed my mind as to what I used to think. I like the people. As a matter of fact, I think it has enhanced it. I think we politicians are undervalued, perhaps, by the general public and the media, that we are not appreciated for what we do, and that bothers me.

The Chair: Any additions? That's all the new people.

Mrs Thorne: That's very helpful. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay, we have about three minutes per caucus for questions now, beginning with Mr Patten.

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Mr Patten: Thank you very much for your presentation. I particularly applaud you for your perception about the title, because it does suggest a negativity associated with politicians that I think is not warranted and certainly doesn't show respect.

The fact is, it was sold at election time as a cost-cutting measure, period. But as we get into the issue, we

find that it really raises many other issues, one of which you alluded to in your opening remarks. It has been mentioned here a couple of times and I welcome your comments on it, and that is, this bill completely abdicates provincial responsibility for electoral boundaries to the federal government. If we agree with one assumption, that the needs of each jurisdiction are different — that's why we have different jurisdictions — then that can be an unwise place to be in when there is no flexibility whatsoever for any provincial considerations that may not be required to be made at the federal level. Would you have a comment to make on that?

Mrs Thorne: Yes, Mr Patten, I quite agree with you, and that was sort of underlying what I was saying. I didn't express it as well as you. But yes, I think that we have in Ontario reasons for having ridings where we do and I think it's a mistake to give that up. As you say, the federal ridings might be for completely different reasons, which would not be to the advantage of Ontarians.

Mr Grandmaitre: Maybe I can add a comment. I've been around Queen's Park for the last 12 years, five years in government, in cabinet, and now in the opposition. I can tell you that I think my responsibilities at Queen's Park have increased in the last five or six years for the simple reason that this province has been moving along at a terrible pace. It's difficult for all of us to keep track of the many changes, and I think by having fewer politicians and fewer people in our constituency offices to talk to our constituents, it makes it very difficult for us to keep abreast and to inform our people. That's one of the main responsibilities of somebody who's 350 miles away or 325 miles away from his constituents. I think we have a job to communicate with our people.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Grandmaitre.

Mr Grandmaitre: I'm being cut off, as usual.

The Chair: Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: Mrs Thorne, I want to thank you for your presentation. I found it very useful and I thought you were very articulate in the points you made. Three points I want to try to make quickly: (1) On the title, you're quite correct and I think that was the intent of the government to do that, because they're very clever in terms of how they present bills, just as they did with the employment equity bill; they called it a quota bill. Whatever has resonance with the public, they will simply cater to it and sadly, in my view, it's a problem when they do that. There is a purpose, there is a design to it. It isn't by accident that they come up with these titles. But you've hit on it, and I think it diminishes us as it tries to cater to the public. That's the first point.

On the second point — and I want to touch on what Mr Stewart said later if I have the time — I'm sure you didn't say, as I didn't say, the way Mr Maves portrays it, that what the federal level of government does is not any less significant than what we do. You didn't say that; I didn't hear you say that. He portrayed it as such. They are important issues no doubt, you will agree.

Mrs Thorne: Of course.

Mr Marchese: What you were saying and what I was saying is that as you get on with the various levels, they're more distant and that people tend to see municipal politicians more often than they will see a provincial,

more often see a provincial than they will see a federal person. I think that's what you were getting at.

Mrs Thorne: Yes, that's it. Thank you.

Mr Marchese: I just wanted to clear that up between you and me and him and whoever else is listening here.

Mr Stewart makes some interesting points about representation, with which I disagree fundamentally, and that's our difference and problem. He says, "We've got high-tech stuff now." We have high-tech stuff now in our constituencies and my staff is still burdened with too many cases. It doesn't matter how much more efficient you make it, it doesn't eliminate the case work. They're still there. We still have to write letters intelligently. It takes time. He says, "If you have competent staff..." I have, I believe, the most competent staff I've ever seen. We still have a problem in terms of our ability to deal with all the constituency cases.

He says as well that we're catering too much to the public and that they should stand up on their own two feet and do their own stuff. That's the way they used to do it in the old days when government was so inaccessible. But I've got people on social assistance, people with mental disabilities who come into my office needing help, and it takes hours of my staff's time to deal with it. Does he somehow suggest that those people with mental problems go on their own and handle their own problems, or people on social assistance? We've got a problem. If we don't help them —

Mrs Marland: No, he's not suggesting that.

Mr Gilchrist: That's offensive.

Mr Marchese: — they're on their own.

Mr Hastings: On a point of order, Mr Chairman —

Mr Gilchrist: Right out of the gutter.

Mrs Marland: It doesn't become you, Rosario.

Mr Stewart: If you're going to criticize, hold to the facts.

Mr Marchese: I'll have time to come back to this.

The Chair: No, Mr Marchese. Actually, your time is up.

Mr Hastings, do you have a point of order?

Mr Hastings: My point of order was simply his reference that, by implication, some of us are a little less concerned with the disabled. I don't accept that in the slightest.

The Chair: Mr Maves.

Mr Maves: When I list a litany of things that are done at the federal level, one of the things I'm pretty sure was in your notes was that less day-to-day things happen at the federal level. But the reason I list them is because there are really quite a few day-to-day things that happen at that level. I don't think anyone's out to maliciously say that the federal MPs are any less important or anything, but I think there is a misconception because what most people see is federal politicians being active in international politics and they see the military. Some of that stuff may be not so day-to-day and significant in the everyday lives of people, but many of the other things I have mentioned are very much day-to-day and significant in the lives of everyday people and I'd like to bring them out because I don't think it's a valid criticism to make of that level.

The other thing I want to say is that at the provincial level we deal with education and health, for instance, two areas that are very close to people's lives on a day-to-day basis. But you should remember that in my area, in the Niagara region, fewer than 400,000 people, I've got 68 trustees who are elected politicians to help the public deal with the school system. Every hospital has a public board with 12 or more members on it who are there to help the public. I've got 30 regional councillors in that area; I've got 112 municipal councillors in that area. So aside from the six MPPs in the Niagara region, there are 210 other elected officials who look after provincial areas of jurisdiction like municipal affairs and education.

Mrs Thorne: But Mr Maves, is it not true that this present government is moving to reduce those numbers very significantly in terms of school boards and municipal councillors and so on?

Mr Grandmaître: Right on.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Maves. Thank you very much, Mrs Thorne. We appreciate your being here this afternoon and giving us your input.

Mrs Thorne: Thank you very much.

Mrs Marland: Oh, I didn't get —

Mr Sergio: I would like to hear — give three minutes to Margaret. Come on.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Ken Vowles.

Mrs Marland: We had less time —

Mr Sergio: I approve. She gets three minutes. She has a very important question. Please, two minutes?

Mr Gilchrist: Let's keep this on track, please. Cut the glib comments.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, with all due respect, I take offence to what he — because I am trying to be kind to Mrs Marland.

Mrs Marland: He was, actually.

Mr Sergio: Mr Gilchrist, we told you —

Mr Gilchrist: We have 20 minutes for each group. We're inconveniencing the other groups.

Mr Sergio: It doesn't matter.

Mr Gilchrist: It doesn't matter?

Mr Sergio: We're spending 20 minutes when nobody's here. I just took offence to your comments.

Mr Gilchrist: Likewise.

The Chair: Okay, gentlemen, I think we should deal with —

Mr Sergio: Next time, keep them for yourself.

The Chair: I think we should deal with those issues in another forum.

Mr Sergio: I just don't believe how low can you get.

KENNETH VOWLES

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming this afternoon, Mr Vowles. We appreciate your being here. You have 20 minutes. Should you allow some time for questions, they would begin with Mr Marchese.

Mr Kenneth Vowles: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for inviting me before you. My background, just to tell you something about myself, I'm ex-military. I spent 25 years in Canada's military in the security field.

Interjection.

Mr Sergio: You don't deserve anything.

The Chair: Excuse me, please.

Mr Gilchrist: I don't think profanity is in order, Mr Chair.

The Chair: I think it's in very poor taste for us to be arguing among ourselves in front of people who have taken the time out to come and give us their input on a bill. I ask you please to show some respect.

Mr Vowles: Thank you. As I was saying, just a bit about my background so you know where I come from: I'm ex-military, 25 years, and I've been since that time — by the way, I jumped out of airplanes with a Liberal, Gilles Morin, about 40 years ago, and not just to stick with the Liberals, I also jumped out with a Reformer called Bob Ringma. He jumped out of airplanes. But I never jumped with a PC or an NDP, so I'm sorry about that.

Mr Stewart: Nobody's pushed us out yet.
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Mr Vowles: Since that time I've been in business. I'm now retired. I'm working for a newspaper at this time. From the provincial point of view, I was a campaign manager for a federal member at one time, for the last election, but we won't mention the party.

Let me continue, if I may. I thank you for giving me this opportunity, as I say. As we all know, Elections Canada recently held hearings, completed reports and consulted MPs in order to revise the electoral boundaries. This, I feel, was long overdue. We have learned that in the next federal election there will be 103 ridings, up from the 99 of today, due to the new electoral boundaries here in Ontario. I will not question the results of that commission that state there will be 103 ridings in Ontario for the House of Commons, but if representation by population and area has been considered in these findings for the federal House, why are these figures not the same and applicable for the Ontario Legislature?

It is only common sense that riding boundary lines be the same federally and provincially, and I strongly support the government's action in lowering the number of MPP seats from the present 130 to 103. Lowering the number of MPPs must result in a considerable saving.

I learned it costs us, the taxpayers — and I've been one for nearly 50 years in this country — approximately \$220,000 for each MPP, and this figure does not include the many varied miscellaneous expenses. Simple math tells me that reducing the number of MPPs from 130 to 103 means we lose 27 seats in the next provincial House, and this represents a saving of \$5.94 million. This is indeed a ballpark figure. The true saving, I'm sure, when all is considered, that is, all the offshoots and avenues from taking away these additional seats, will result in a saving closer to \$10 million.

Some may argue that MPPs are closer to their constituents than the federal members. I doubt this assumption. Ask any constituent their respective federal or provincial riding and they will give you a blank stare. The average Canadian, by his very nature, is not a political animal. The average Canadian does not write, telephone, fax or communicate with his federal or provincial member on a regular basis. In fact, a shocking number of average Canadians do not even bother to vote.

I therefore feel that although some regions may be large geographically, they are not unworkable for the member of the provincial Parliament. This may be their argument. If MPPs are requested in the isolated locations from time to time, I'm sure they can delegate this attendance to competent assistants. Moreover, in today's modern electronic society, it is easy to communicate by letter, by telephone or by fax.

The maxim "rep by pop" surely is the same provincially as federally. I can only conclude by wondering why the electoral boundaries, federal and provincial, have not always been the same. They should have been harmonized long ago, in my opinion.

Ontario is now carrying a \$100-billion debt. We are spending \$1 million an hour — you can see how long it takes to spend \$1 million — or \$24 million a day more than we are taking in. The bleeding has to stop. We cannot and must not pass this horrendous debt to our children and our children's children. We can help, every saving can help, and reducing the 130 members to 103 is just one way of doing this. Surely it's nothing more than common sense.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We've got about five minutes per caucus left for questions, beginning with Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: Mr Vowles, what is your view of politicians?

Mr Vowles: I think it's an honourable profession. I was asked to run myself at one time. I think they're grossly underpaid, if you're interested in what I think. I think they're underpaid for what they do. They're expected to work far more hours than the average Canadian realizes how many hours they put in the House, be it at the provincial or federal level. So I have respect for politicians. I always have.

Mr Marchese: They work hard, in your view?

Mr Vowles: I certainly agree, sir. Yes, they do.

Mr Marchese: But the fact that they work hard and put in long hours, when they pick up a bigger riding, it's manageable in your view, obviously. It's not a big deal.

Mr Vowles: No, I'm not saying it's not a big deal, but I am saying it's manageable because they have assistants. If an area, the largest area in Ontario — we are giving two more seats in northern Ontario because of the boundary lines, I believe.

Mr Marchese: Federal, yes.

Mr Vowles: Of course, yes. But I think this will follow, surely, the same lines provincially.

Mr Marchese: We lose 27 seats provincially. That's what happens.

Mr Vowles: Okay.

Mr Marchese: So you view politicians positively.

Mr Vowles: Absolutely.

Mr Marchese: What do you think the role of the politician is?

Mr Vowles: To represent his constituents, first and foremost, and secondly the party he represents. I believe the first and foremost thing he should do is represent the people who put him there.

Mr Marchese: I understand that. You were saying that the Canadian public are not terribly political animals and —

Mr Vowles: I'm sorry, if I can butt in right there and say, sir, this afternoon this is a public hearing. I didn't have to book a seat. Just to answer that before —

Mr Marchese: I appreciate it. But you were making a point about that, and I think the point you were getting at is that given that people are not terribly active or political, if we reduce the number of seats, nobody would notice. That's more or less what I gather from the point you're making.

Mr Vowles: Yes, I think I'd agree on that.

Mr Marchese: So even though they work hard and all that, even though they might pick up more work, by and large it's manageable because nobody out there is terribly active anyway even though we're more active than the US.

Mr Vowles: Yes.

Mr Marchese: So your larger view is that we spend too much money and that's a problem we've got to deal with, and so this is good to take away \$11 million, taking away 27 politicians and all of the staff that's connected to that, because it will help to deal with the deficit.

Mr Vowles: A hundred billion dollars, I cannot even spell that amount, it's so large. For a province with 10 million people, sir, I think \$100 billion, we'd better tackle it or your children and my children will be tackling it. That's why no one wants — the not in my back yard theory. But I think we've got to start, and we'll start at the top.

Mr Marchese: No, I understood that. I was trying to connect your desire to cut politicians with dealing with the deficit, and obviously there's a connection there.

Mr Vowles: There is.

Mr Marchese: Do you think by cutting the 27 politicians we will become more efficient, perhaps, in our offices?

Mr Vowles: I don't think we'll lose any efficiency. We might not become more efficient but I doubt if we'll become less efficient. I think they'll still do their job.

Mr Marchese: I was trying to make a case before, and you heard me argue prior to you coming to speak. I was saying that I'm having a difficult time in my office. From what? From my meetings with my staff on a regular basis, my staff talks to me about the terribly difficult time they've got finding more and more time to deal with cases that come into my office on a regular basis.

The most complicated are the ones that deal with social assistance, because they are most heartbreaking for the staff trying to deal with the problems they bring. The other most heartbreaking issues come with people with mental illness, for a variety of reasons, in terms of finding a place or the problems they might be facing wherever they might be, and other personal matters that we sometimes don't know how to deal with.

The cuts are not helping, in my view. The more and more cases we get in my downtown Toronto riding, the more complicated my job becomes in terms of my ability to help them. So when I pick up more riding, to deal with more issues of that nature — and it will become more complicated, I suggest — how do you suggest I deal with it? With better technology, or what do you suggest to me?

Mr Vowles: I suggest, sir, that you may have a special riding where you do have an extra-large amount of people and obviously it will be increased. I suggest you get some competent assistants.

Mr Marchese: You heard me say —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese. Mr Gilchrist, followed by Mr Stewart.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much, Mr Vowles. I really appreciate your comments. You raised a couple of issues where I'd like to give you some statistics. You asked why there necessarily are more provincial MPPs than there are MPs, and I would suggest that this has not always been the case. Back in 1933 the then Conservative government did exactly what we're doing today. It trimmed 20% of the sitting members. Why? Because it faced dire economic circumstances and it believed then, as we believe today, there was a need to show leadership right from the top. They couldn't ask people at the height of the Depression to be making sacrifices that they themselves would not make.

By the way, at the same time, they passed an equally impressive reduction in the size of the executive council or the cabinet. I'm pleased to say that we don't have to do that because we have the smallest cabinet since 1956 already. But it is not the case that we always had more MPPs. That's a fairly recent phenomenon. In fact, it had grown to the point where we grew 42% faster than the number of federal MPs did.

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You mentioned representation by population and the importance of representing the people first. That's the first obligation of an MPP and I couldn't agree with you more. What would you say to the ability under the current system for a member to fairly represent his or her constituents? In some ridings in this province there are only 19,000 voters, but other ridings today have 129,000 voters. Do you agree that if one riding is 100% and the other riding is at 625%, that's fair?

Mr Vowles: Obviously not, of course.

Mr Gilchrist: So would you agree with me that by moving to something where now the greatest variance between the smallest riding and the largest is only going to be 40%, that's a fair system?

Mr Vowles: Of course. It's more fair to equal people out more to the MPP. I agree. I'm aware of that figure. It was 90 ridings that it went down to in 1933. I have the figures here, so I'm aware of that.

Mr Gilchrist: You did great research. I'd just like to throw two other numbers out at you if I could. Earlier today it was alluded to twice by one of our colleagues and by two members making representations that PEI should be the model for fair representation. PEI has one MLA for every 5,000 people, which means we would need 2,200 MPPs today. That is what they said on the record twice. They also said it's impossible to represent and it's a problem to represent if we go larger. Let me just say that in the US House of Representatives, if they only had to represent the same number of people per representative that we represent today in Ontario, there would need to be 2,650 representatives. They represent five times as many constituents: not Senator, but each representative.

What do you think to either of those two suggestions, that instead of reducing, we expand to either the PEI model or to the —

Mr Vowles: No problem at all. Maybe we should go out and borrow another \$300 billion or \$400 billion from Japan or somewhere and wipe out the debt — let the kids wipe it out.

Mr Gilchrist: I just want to make sure that when Hansard records “No problem,” you were being facetious.

Mr Vowles: I am being facetious. I object strongly to borrowing any more money, and certainly my whole thrust today, why I’m here, gentlemen, is to tell you that I feel as a taxpayer, just one, that we should reduce the debt.

Mr Sergio: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I’ve been here since this morning and I’ve heard every deputation. No one has suggested that we follow the particular system based on 5,000 population.

The Chair: That is not a point of order, Mr Sergio.

Mr Sergio: No, that is to indicate —

Mr Gilchrist: It was Mr Cullen, the regional councillor.

Mr Patten: He didn’t suggest that.

Mr Grandmaître: Mr Chair, I think it’s very important that we should straighten that record out right now.

The Chair: It is not a point of order. Mr Stewart.

Interjections.

Mr Stewart: Gentlemen, if you would be quiet, I could have a little bit of time with this gentleman. I’d like to ask him a question. I made the comment a little while ago that I thought it was time we started to help ourselves a little bit and indeed help each other. What seems to be coming out is the fact that we’re not going to be able to help our constituents unless we do it ourselves personally. Do you believe that’s the role of the MPP totally, or is it not partially the MPP and a darn good staff?

Mr Vowles: Of course, a good staff and the MP. Obviously we can’t have more MPPs, if this is part of your thrust. Cut and dried, we’ve got to reduce because we’ve got a debt. I’ve got two children. Maybe people don’t have children. I do, and I’m not going to pass this debt on to them.

Mr Stewart: Would you agree then that —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Stewart. Mr Patten.

Mr Patten: Thank you very much, Mr Vowles. I would like to straighten out one thing, though, that Mr Gilchrist suggested. Mr Cullen today, in attempting to explain the federal approach to how they arrive at their boundaries, made reference to PEI. He did not at any time suggest that’s what we should be doing. He was saying if you’re just going to take *prima facie* —

Mr Gilchrist: He said that was a model for good representation.

Mr Patten: No, he didn’t.

The Chair: Mr Patten has the floor.

Mr Patten: If you were going to take that, then this is the model, and he did not recommend the model, by the way.

Mr Vowles, there are incredible variances across the nation, as you know.

Mr Vowles: Of course.

Mr Patten: Who do you think has the lowest proportion of MPPs to MPs of any of the provinces right now?

Mr Vowles: I would think very likely Saskatchewan. I don’t really know. Saskatchewan, one of the prairie provinces?

Mr Patten: No. Ontario does at the moment.

Mr Vowles: With 10 million people?

Mr Patten: Yes, for 10 million people, and our average representation right now is 85,000. We have the lowest number in relation to the number of MPs we have, and we have the highest representation, an average of 85,000 at the moment. So in relation to all the other provinces, right now Ontario has the lowest ratio. It will then, of course, increase dramatically to the same level as the federal government representation of over 100,000, and that will be substantial.

Would you agree that it would be fair — I presume we’ll move in this direction because the government wants to move that way — that if there is an increased workload, at least the MPPs should have the same resources as the federal MPs have in order to do their work?

Mr Grandmaître: The same budget.

Mr Vowles: It’s a very good question, sir. They certainly should have enough funds to do the job, but I’m just wondering whether you’re suggesting there the same budget — I might back up on that because I’m once again back to the moneys involved, but they should have more moneys perhaps paid to them. I believe it’s \$220,000 for —

Mr Patten: It’s \$201,000.

Mr Vowles: So maybe we’ll give them another \$10,000 to get an extra assistant.

Mr Grandmaître: I’d like to use the same analogy as Mr Gilchrist. He pointed out that we do have a riding in the province of Ontario with 19,000 and another one with 129,000, and that’s ridiculous.

Mr Vowles: Absolutely.

Mr Grandmaître: We both agree that we can’t have this kind of representation. Do you agree that we should enlarge geographically that riding of 19,000 people four times, five times? Do you think we should enlarge it or make it bigger geographically?

Mr Vowles: The bottom line is, geographically yes, but we’ve also got to consider how many constituents you are looking after. I just think it should be more balanced out. If you’ve got one at 19,000 and someone has 50,000 or so, that doesn’t seem very fair to the member, federal or provincial.

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: I already had my time, but if you want to give me more —

The Chair: Oh, I’m sorry. Thank you very much for being honest with me there. I appreciate that.

Mr Vowles, thank you very much. We appreciate your input here this afternoon.

GEORGE STAIRS

The Chair: Our next presenter is George Stairs. Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr George Stairs: Thank you. My name is George Stairs, and I'll just read my presentation.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will have heard by now many presentations on the cost saving that will be realized by reducing the number of provincial ridings to mirror those of the federal government: less MPPs' salaries; less services; less office space and staff; a chance of competition, between Elections Ontario and Elections Canada, to run cheaper, more effective elections etc. I agree with all these goals and I feel that there will be no loss of effective representation, which, after all, is good enough federally and should therefore be good enough provincially.

Notwithstanding the mentioned reasons, my strongest support for this necessary change has more to do with civics and democracy. Franklin Roosevelt suggested that politics and governance cannot and should not be separated in a democracy. It is the political pressure brought upon those that govern us, at election times and between elections, that produce the populace style of government we know as democracy.

By having a provincial and federal parliamentarian representing the same group of people, we will be able to focus the political process of governance and thus must necessarily improve our democracy. For example, voters will be more easily able to compare the quality of policies and performance between the two representatives, demand joint efforts to help solve problems in the ridings and create within the political parties a broader and more consistent view and united action between their federal and provincial wings towards the needs of the riding. This should increase participation in our political system and improve the quality of representation.

I view the impact of this legislation as equal to that of the election expenses act brought in a number of years ago. It is important to nurture the democratic system and to maintain or increase the level of civics through policies of electoral reform such as the election expenses act or the Fewer Politicians Act.

Thank you for listening to my submission.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We've got a fair bit of time left per caucus for questions, five-plus minutes, beginning with Mr Hastings for the government.

Mr Hastings: Mr Stairs, there has been a theme running through some of these hearings — I hear it replayed today by some colleagues — that the title of the act, the Fewer Politicians Act, is clearly an anti-politician attitude or mindset and that we are purely playing to the latest public opinion, if that's the situation, and in looking at ethics from I think it's the centre for ethical policies, ranking police forces and used car salesmen and politicians, used car salesmen were at 10% and I think state representatives were at about 15%.

1340

Mr Patten: That's an Americanism.

Mr Hastings: Yes, I know it's American. It's awful that we cite —

Mr Stairs: That's an interesting statistic.

Mr Hastings: Anyway, do you believe that we are consciously playing to that public mindset?

Mr Stairs: The title of the act states it clearly. I suppose you can obfuscate if you wish, à la 1984, and

call it something else, but I think what we're talking about here is fewer politicians. It's an act to bring in fewer politicians, so I'm not sure that you're playing to the public sympathies by simply stating what you're doing as the title of the act.

In terms of the popularity of politicians, that varies from era to era and from time to time. I would perhaps agree with you that at the present time politicians are a little lower on the scale than they have been in the past or will probably be in the future, but I don't think that should determine in any way policies that are set by those who we consider to be our leaders. So no, I don't think the act is poorly named here, and I don't think you're catering to populist opinion or whatever with it.

Mr Hastings: The other popular theme that plays is that if you have increased population to deal with in fewer ridings, the only way you can deal with the increased demands is to have more staff resources. What suggestions could you make to us to deal with these additional situations in terms of better management, use of technology or time, or any other way you'd deal with an increasing workload?

Mr Stairs: We all understand today that the wealth in our country is produced by productivity, and the drive by business, both large and small, in recent years has been to do more with less staff, to increase the productivity, to increase our wealth and to improve our future.

It can't be any less for — there are three major groups in our society: unions, business and government. Unions have understood that they have to take lower pay deals. The present thing with Canadian Airlines, for instance, is an example of that. Large business has understood that, in terms of getting rid of middle levels of management and executives. Government has to understand that. It would appear that the present government does understand that.

I feel sorry for the MPPs who have to work harder. I can tell you, in my particular job over the last two or three years, I've had to work harder too. I work longer hours; I don't get paid any more. This is nothing new.

Mr Baird: I would just say I agree with your last statement. Obviously there's going to be no distribution that's perfect, there are going to be no riding boundaries that are perfect, and there are arguments. Reasonable people can disagree. My colleagues opposite are all good people; they're all reasonable people. We can disagree. Nothing will be perfect.

I think your last comment speaks to people whom I speak to in my constituency who say, "Listen, I'm a small business person. I had to let someone go and I have to work at the coffee counter of my doughnut shop, which I started and own, a little bit longer myself. I have to work harder because I can't afford to hire someone," or an insurance agent who has to do more of his own secretarial jobs because he simply doesn't have enough money to have as much support staff as he had before, or the family where one of the parents has to take on some extra hours at work because they simply don't have enough money to survive, to provide for their family.

Everyone's had to make those adjustments in society, and I think it would be inappropriate for us as decision-makers and leaders in government to simply say that

because we're so important, because we're more important than all those people I just mentioned, we are exempt from that restructuring. I would just argue that no group in society can be exempt.

We are facing some tough financial times, caused by a whole host of reasons and we've got to deal with them. If the leadership didn't come from the top, where would it start? We're going to ask just the little people? We'll say at Queen's Park: "We'll let go a few pages, we'll let go a few students, we'll let go a few secretaries. But the members? No, actually we're going to increase the number of members, or keep them the same. They'll be exempt from cuts."

I just think it's really genuinely important to show that we take this restructuring and downsizing seriously, that we've got to be part of the solution and be one of the first to feel the restructuring before we ask our education partners, our health care partners or what have you to undertake that similar process.

Mr Sergio: Mr Stairs, with the approval of this legislation — it seems that it's going to go through anyway, and I hope the hearings we will be conducting will not be just a charade; we hope to accomplish some changes, with the government's assistance — we will be representing the same constituency, the same territory, the same type of people, if you will, with respect to where they may be coming from, language, customs, all those things.

In my own particular case, let's say I have a federal member who, due to his resources, because he's at the federal level, is able to send out letters on a monthly basis informing his constituents as to what's happening up in Ottawa; not necessarily who is in government or whatever, but whatever is happening in Ottawa. He notifies, he advises, he keeps his constituency informed. The same constituents say to me, "How come I only get two letters from you a year?" I tell my people, "I don't have the same budget."

Somebody else says, "It could be that at the federal level they are more efficient." I say: "No. Do you have any problem with the way we've been serving you?" "No. As a matter of fact, we like it." "Then what's the problem?" "Well, we like to know what goes on at Queen's Park. We like to know what's happening" — I'm not saying this because this government happens to be here now — "with labour reform or VLTs or the Fewer Politicians Act. We like to be kept informed, so why can't you do that?" "I don't have the resources." "Why don't you?" "We just don't have the resources."

How do you feel about that? Do you think we should have the same resources as the federal member, if that is the way we're going to be going? Should we be able — I don't say to compete with the federal member but to have the same resources so that we can make not only personal representation but also inform our community on the same level and same basis as our federal counterpart?

Mr Stairs: I work at the Chateau Lafayette. It's a small bar in Lower Town here in Ottawa. In the immediate area there are 37 other restaurants and bars that I compete with daily. I do not have the same budget as those other restaurants and bars. I do not have the same advantages. My bar happens to be the oldest bar in the

city of Ottawa — 1849. When you walk inside it, it still looks like the old style hotels that you see throughout rural parts of Ontario, with a ladies' and gentlemen's side and a tavern side. Yet I have been able to compete with all the come-latelys and their Tiffany lamps and their tables because I have used my disadvantages not to cry to somebody else for more money or less taxes or anything else; I have discovered new ways of contacting my customers, new ways of appealing to them that are cheap and inexpensive.

You're going to have to do the same thing. The truth of the matter is that you cannot simply any longer, as a part of large government, depend on us, the taxpayers, to equalize your playing field or to provide you with a monopoly. You have to be competitive like all the rest of us. You will have to do it on less.

1350

Mr Marchese: Mr Stairs, the Provincial Auditor has identified some problems in a variety of different fields, and one of them is welfare. He made some suggestions to the government, and the government acted quickly last year, even without any assistance from anybody, and it cut 22% from social assistance support. The Provincial Auditor last year as well, and this year, identified another problem, which is that we are not collecting about \$4 billion to \$5 billion worth of money from business because we don't have the person-power to go and audit and basically collect. So we haven't acted on that. What do you think about that?

Mr Stairs: What does that have to do with reducing the number of MPPs?

Mr Marchese: Because you're concerned about cutting to save money, aren't you?

Mr Stairs: No. Did you hear my submission? I mentioned that I approved of that, but my submission had nothing to do with cost saving.

Mr Marchese: All right, let me move on.

Mr Stairs: You didn't listen, did you?

Mr Marchese: Mr Stairs, I listened to you very well. I'm going to come back to some of the points you made, all right? You want the politicians to increase their productivity in their offices. I've got several assistants — that's the terminology you used —

Mr Stairs: To answer a question; not in my submission.

Mr Marchese: That's all right, Mr Stairs. You can answer it or not, however you want.

Mr Stairs: All right, go ahead.

Mr Marchese: I'm going to pose you a question and you can do what you want. My assistants have quite a number of degrees and they're very able. They're very overworked with the kind of case work we've got, and it's not because they're not working or they're not effective or they do not have the degrees. How do you expect to increase productivity from my workers so they can be as competitive as you're trying to be in your field?

Mr Stairs: Let me use another example. My wife is the manager of the Bank of Commerce at Alta Vista Plaza. It's a CIBC. In the last year she has been ordered by head office to cut two full-time staff. The work has not decreased at the banks; in fact it has increased. They

now have to sell mutual funds, they now have to sell investments. In fact, she had to get her securities course. Soon they'll have to be selling insurance. They are all highly qualified, highly skilled people. They all work harder; they all work smarter.

You cannot simply use that argument any more. It's a nice argument. I feel sympathetic for your people. I feel sympathetic for them when I used to leave at 5 o'clock and I now leave at 7 o'clock from work. We all do more. I work on weekends now.

Mr Marchese: I heard you say that. I have to tell you this: I'm not sympathetic to the point that you're making, and let me tell you why. In your comparison, talking about your wife and having to do more, I don't believe the banks are doing a good service to you or to the rest of their clients. Now, you might like it because your wife is a good person and she's going to work harder like you are, I understand — I'm going to make the point and then you can respond — but I don't think it's good for the clients or it's good for your wife to have to put in more time to do the job that she was doing. What it will do is cause more stress for your wife, that person, and other people in that same situation, for less money now, I suspect, than before. I'm not certain that we're doing ourselves and society a good deed.

I'm not certain, in the comparison you make, to then bring the kind of service we provide for our clients, the people out there, taxpayers all, that when you tell me we've got to do what your wife is doing, that we can't help it because this government's saying we've got to cut, so my workers have to somehow put more time in to do their job. They're very skilled, full of degrees, and putting in a lot of time now beyond the time that is paid. I'm not sure what you're expecting of society or that you think this is a very healthy thing that is going on.

When I ask you about whether or not we're collecting the \$5 billion in taxes and you say you don't know what that's got to do with anything, I'm not sure that you're understanding the connection I'm making. We have a problem here I'm identifying and I'd like to know what your response is to that.

Mr Stairs: I said your initial question had nothing to do with my submission, but the way I will respond is simply this: From my MPPs I expect leadership and managerial ability. I expect you to know what the definition of that is, and I'm not sure you do. But you have to find better ways, through managerial ability and through your leadership, to cover the bases that you're presently covering with less money and less people.

I don't think that can be stated any more simply, and that has been done in my own business. That has been done everywhere. We can go out on the street here and find people who will agree with that statement. Why do you disagree with it?

Mr Marchese: Mr Stairs, I understand what you're saying and I have to —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese, and thank you, Mr Stairs. We appreciate your input here this afternoon.

Our next presenter was to have been the Nepean Chamber of Commerce. I understand they will not be showing up, so we are going to get back to our discussion. We had three people left to make a comment.

Mr Patten, you hadn't got on the list. We're going through this. Did you want to make a comment about having members standing in front of the committee? Then we're going to vote on Mr Marchese's motion that is on the floor. Did you want to be on the list?

Mr Patten: Yes, please.

The Chair: Mr Marchese, I'm going to let you go last, since it is your motion.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much. I'm trying to remember where we were in the train of thought when we broke this morning. Already at second reading we have had Mr Miclash, Mr Martin, Ms McLeod, Mr Gravelle, Mr Bartolucci, Mr Wildman, Mr Wood and Mr North. The first seven names are northern members. I guess bang on half the northern members have already spoken to this bill for 30 minutes. Others have had numerous two-minute responses. Mr North, the only independent, has already spoken to this bill.

I will not impute motive and would not want anyone to infer that I am imputing motive in this, but I must say I might have been more responsive had the request been to speak before the committee in Toronto. They want to make these speeches in front of their home constituents, I must see this as something other than a genuine belief that they haven't had an opportunity to speak. We heard one of the members say earlier here today that they have two jobs: One is what they do in the Legislature and one is what they do in the eyes of their constituents. I don't think it is appropriate to take the time for public hearings to allow for a forum for anyone from this side of the House or the other. I think they are genuinely designed to be a mechanism for people to come forward.

The most fundamental thing in all this is the fact that the other two parties asked us to go to the north, to hear the people of the north — not to hear them but to hear the people of the north. I would remind them that every space taken up by an MPP speaking is a space that a member of their constituencies will not be able to occupy. Either there was not a sincere belief that they have enough people coming forward to fill just one day in each town or this is designed for perhaps less than altruistic reasons.

In particular because we have had the leader of the official opposition speak in the House and because at least, I believe, three of the five people who have requested were on that list of names I've just read off, it is totally inappropriate for us to grant extra time, particularly in the context of the fact that there will be third reading debate and every one of the members, even those who have already spoken, will be eligible to speak again for 30 minutes if they so choose and if their respective House leaders allow them.

The Chair: Mr Grandmaître.

Mr Grandmaître: I said what I had to say. I think I've said it all. Nobody will change their minds, and I find this deplorable.

1400

Mr Patten: I find myself looking at it somewhat like Margaret Marland. I believe these committee hearings are essentially for the public. There may be extraneous or special cases where the committee may decide that yes, an MPP in a particular instance should be heard and the

rationale would be discussed and debated, and if there is some merit to it, then the committee in its wisdom hopefully would provide that exceptional circumstance to arise.

Like Margaret, I agree that someone like Peter, who does not have the same opportunity, would be appropriate. I think it is a little dangerous to begin to throw it open and suggest that whoever wants to speak now can speak and we get into these types of things.

However, I do have a suggestion: One way we can provide a forum for all three parties is that if we find that the committee is unable to completely fill the slots we have available, then we could share the time and each caucus could decide who might want to speak for that proportion at the committee.

Mr Grandmaître: I offered them that.

Mr Patten: It seems to me that would be a reasonable one. It would not show favouritism on any side and it would address the issue the committee had before it.

The Chair: Our last comments will come from the proposer, Mr Marchese.

Mr Marchese: I'm going to try to convince a few Tories that they're wrong in this, and we'll see whether I'm successful.

The Chair: Just to remind you, Mr Marchese, we also have to deal with that other issue during this same break.

Mr Marchese: We've got another break here. This is not a function of time. I'm not sure that the more time I have, the more convincing I'll be.

Mrs Marland: Rosario, would you tell the committee that Shelley Martel was an MPP who came before a committee on rent control? Mr Hampton didn't mention that this morning.

Mr Marchese: Okay. I think he was responding to the fact that we would be setting a dangerous precedent if we were to do this. He was pointing to the fact that we have done it before as a way of showing that his view was different from yours in terms of historical precedents. If she's done that, it's a way of reinforcing his opinion that it has happened. Precedents mean that you start it once. When you've started once, it means it's happened.

Mrs Marland: That's the problem.

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure I agree with you or Mr Patten that we can make an exception for Mr North simply because he's not representing any political party. He's a politician at Queen's Park and he does not get equal time, does not get as much time as we do, but he's a politician there. I'm not sure I would argue or find reasons to make an exception for Mr North and not the others.

We have changed the process quite a lot, and in this change of process we have changed the very nature of this debate, in my view. The way we have done this will affect many members, some of you very much, I suspect, some will disappear completely and some will be partially affected and so on. But many are affected individually and feel strongly about this issue. Some argue that this is not a big deal and that we can do it and it can be handled. Others argue quite strongly that it's a problem for a variety of reasons. I have said that the people who have to represent those big ridings up there in the north — I don't live there and have only seen the north

every now and then around constitutional discussions, but I tell you I wouldn't want to represent those ridings. Having seen it, I understand the difficulty they face.

Mr Gilchrist, when you talk about 19,000 in some ridings and 120,000 elsewhere, I appreciate the differences in numbers but I also understand geography and its implications in terms of how reachable or accessible or inaccessible they can be to each other, let alone to their political representatives. It may not be fair for one vote for each person and that's the way it should be viewed, but on the other hand, if we don't take that into account, we've got a problem.

We're changing the very nature of this discussion around representation, therefore I argue that individual members who want to speak to the committee feel strongly about this, as you do on the other side. When I say that I quite support the idea that a Liberal or an NDPer would want to speak, I hope you would want to do the same. I don't have any problem with that.

I don't see this as a dangerous precedent. A precedent has been given, but even if it weren't, I don't see it as dangerous. I see it as setting a precedent, no doubt, but I don't see it as a problem. You do, Mrs Marland, and I understand that, but what I really want to say is that from time to time we have to take opportunities to free ourselves from party politics. We don't do that too often, but we can. I have to tell you, and only Margaret might know because she was in meetings I've been at, from time to time I would ask my staff: "What's wrong with a particular motion? Why can't we support it?" On a number of occasions I was successful in convincing my staff that there were things you said in opposition that I could support. We tend to be very actively involved in party politics on almost every issue, however inane, and that's where I think we should free ourselves from what is ideological that we all need to support as a caucus and what isn't. I don't see this as an ideological thing.

Mr Gilchrist said the reason they want to do this is for politics. They don't need to come in front of the committee to be political or to get the politics or the media in their own ridings. They're going to get them anyway. If you think somehow they're not getting that, maybe you haven't been seeing it. They're getting the media. That's not the issue, and in not coming in front of this committee they will not be prevented from getting it. They'll get it anyway.

Mr Gilchrist: That's the point. They get space.

Mr Marchese: No, I'm sorry. I'm not making — whatever point you said, that's my point. The point I make is that people feel strongly and want to come as members to speak to this committee about the changes and their impact on them and on their constituencies. They're going to get the media one way or the other, but I think it's all right for the members to come in front of this committee, wherever they want to come and speak to us, to do so. I don't see that as a danger.

When you defeat this, we're not going to go bananas over it. I'm just saying that from time to time we can free ourselves from seeing everything so ideologically connected. I argue that one way or the other politicians will get the attention they want to get from the media, whether or not it's in front of this committee. These are

the arguments I make. It's not a dangerous precedent, Mrs Marland. I don't see it that way. If this is lost, it's not a big deal. I just want to make the argument that this is not a big deal in the way you make it sound.

The Chair: Mr Marchese's motion was that any member of the Legislature be allowed to appear before the committee.

All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is defeated.

The second issue we have to deal with is a request to be reimbursed for expenses. You've all been given a copy of this. A group from Thunder Bay wants to travel to Dryden to appear before the committee. Of course we're not meeting in Thunder Bay, we're meeting in Dryden, and they have asked, in view of the nature of their group, to be reimbursed for round trip at 20 cents a kilometre plus one night's accommodation for one person. It comes to a total of \$187.50. Basically we have done this on other occasions, so this does not set any kind of precedent.

Mrs Marland: I'll move it.

I move that we —

Mr Gilchrist: Doesn't that require unanimous consent?

The Chair: It does not require unanimous consent. If we have unanimous consent, then we can just stop the discussion.

Mr Marchese: That's something that normally you, with the clerk, would solve without necessarily having to discuss it, but you feel it needs to be here. Is that it?

The Chair: Yes. Basically we can, but I thought we'd bring this particular one before the committee. Do we have unanimous consent?

Mr Stewart: For what?

The Chair: To pay these expenses for this group.

Mr Stewart: No.

The Chair: We don't have unanimous consent. Mrs Marland, you put forward a motion.

Mrs Marland: I'm putting forward a motion after having heard you say that committees have done this in the past.

Mr Patten: Yes, they have.

Mrs Marland: I'm quite willing to spend \$187 for this group to come to Dryden.

The Chair: Any discussion on that?

Mr Stewart: In probably the first committee that ever met back in the summer of last year, much the same type of request came forward. At that particular time it was turned down. I think we are creating a precedent halfway through hearings that we would approve this. I would suggest that it be referred back to the House leaders, whatever, to arrive at some type of solution to this rather than this committee approving something like this halfway through. We've had more requests in the past and they have been turned down. I think the House leaders, if that is where it should go, are remiss in not addressing it, and we go from there, but to start this halfway through this hearing I cannot support.

The Chair: Just to clarify the issue, on this particular committee, since I have chaired it, we have approved any requests we've had like this.

Interjection.

The Chair: We have. Just to let you know, on this particular committee that's been our position.

Mr Sergio: Even the staff knows it.

Mr Gilchrist: I would put a motion on the table that this other motion, until we can be supplied with information dealing with who it was in the past —

The Chair: Mr Marchese has the floor.

Mr Marchese: Mr Chair, I know I came to ask you how I can buy patience. If you have a secret for that, please pass it on.

This is a problem. I thought we'd dealt with this early in your mandate when you got elected. We've had precedents for this for many years. If you want to show leadership and you think you're going to show leadership once again by doing something that I profoundly disagree with you on, you're committing a grave error. People cannot come to Toronto or to the city where we are. We need to guarantee access for people. When we travel they can't always get to that particular city on their own. If you're saying to them they need to pay their own way, you're limiting the democracy and the democratic right people have.

If you're saying they've got to buy that democratic right, we've got a problem. Some people will not be able to afford to come and give their opinion to you if you're having meetings at great distances and you're asking people to come and pay to get there to give their opinion. If that's what you're doing, you are in this particular instance creating a very dangerous precedent indeed. You're committing a grave mistake. If we have to do this over every committee where someone is making a request to come and asks for support, we've got a problem. I hope they will reconsider their position because this is really, in my view, a very dangerous precedent.

Mr Grandmaître: One thing I want to make clear is that this is not a precedent. I've been around at Queen's Park for 12 years and I've sat on five different committees and I've never seen a request turned down, never. I think it would be very unfair —

Mr Gilchrist: That's not true.

Mr Grandmaître: You might say it's untrue, but right now I've got the floor and I can call you a liar after, okay? So now I want —

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Chairman —

Mr Grandmaître: Well, I'm sorry.

Mr Sergio: He keeps interrupting all the time.

Mr Grandmaître: If you want to keep your mouth shut, then —

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist, Mr Grandmaître does have the floor.

Mr Gilchrist: That's unparliamentary language.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist, Mr Grandmaître does have the floor. Mr Grandmaître, I would ask you to withdraw that comment, though. You know the comment. I would ask you to withdraw the comment.

Mr Grandmaître: I said I would call him a liar after.

The Chair: I would ask you to withdraw that.

Mr Grandmaître: Well, I didn't say it. I said I would —

The Chair: I would ask you to withdraw that.

Mr Grandmaître: I will not.

Mr Marchese: You can say that in committee. You can't say it in the House but you can say it here. It may not be nice, but —

Mr Grandmaître: I will not, Mr Chair. I'm sorry. I'm sick and tired of having to listen to that member all day.

Mr Gilchrist: Well, I can tell you a precedent. Resources turned down every request.

The Chair: I think we will take a five-minute recess here.

The committee recessed from 1414 to 1419.

The Chair: Out of respect for the next deputation, who is here at the allotted time, could I suggest that we delay any further discussion on that particular motion until such time as we have another break at 3 o'clock.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, it will take a couple of minutes to finish the item. I think we should finish it, with all due respect.

The Chair: I'm not so sure it will take a couple of minutes.

Mr Sergio: I don't think anybody has any comments.

The Chair: I think we should deal with the next deputation and then deal with this issue at 3 o'clock.

Mr Sergio: I wish I would have the chance to vote, but I have to leave.

Mr Marchese: Mr Chair, Mr Baird indicates it's likely that we can get it out of the way very quickly.

The Chair: Are we ready for a vote on it? No? Okay, then we're going to go on with the next deputation.

Mr Maves: It would only take me a minute.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: The Ottawa-Carleton Federation of Agriculture, Alvin Runnalls, director. Have a seat, gentlemen. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mr Alvin Runnalls: Thank you, Mr Chairman. First of all, a slight correction. It's the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I'm from Dundas county, just south of Ottawa-Carleton, and my two colleagues here are Réjean Pommainville from Russell county, president of the Russell county federation, and Gordon Garlough, president of the Dundas county federation. Yesterday Mr Ken Kelly made a presentation in Toronto, I believe. We do not have a written copy. We'll kind of carry on from that and add an eastern perspective, if you don't mind. Also, I was born in northern Ontario, so it gives me an added idea of distance and added problems that way.

First of all, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity of having these hearings. However, there's a slight problem. I was in Toronto on Wednesday and we heard that morning that there were hearings and that 9 o'clock was the deadline to get your name in, but we did get in. We were a little disappointed about that.

As you know, OFA represents the farmers of rural Ontario. We represent a lot of commodities and a lot of jobs. There are 640,000 jobs created by agriculture in Ontario and that's certainly a very, very important part of the economy. We rank second after automotive, I believe, as far as job creation.

Rural MPs have worked hard to understand agriculture and it's making it a little more difficult when ridings get bigger and more unwieldy and so on.

I guess another issue would be that in rural Ontario we provide an awful lot of raw materials. Even stepping out of agriculture, mining and everything like that, so much

comes from the rural part of the province; it creates, and it's important for people to understand that. Some people feel the cities are the only important thing, but without that rural part of the province, the cities wouldn't be there.

Mr Hastings: Couldn't do without them.

Mr Runnalls: That's right, and we certainly want to be heard in that respect.

I'm doing an overview of this and my colleagues then will zero in on some other things. Another issue: With Ontario having 10 million people and growing rapidly and we're going back from 130 to 103 members of Parliament, it may make it worse rather than better. It's just another point. With that, I'll turn it over to Gordon Garlough.

Mr Gordon Garlough: I'm a farmer from Williamsburg, out Bank Street here almost to the St Lawrence River. Before farming, I was a high school teacher for a number of years and have been active in various community organizations, including the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, community organizations, church groups and so on, and also involved in watching the politics of our rural community. I guess that's what brings me here today, what is happening to the influence that our rural community has.

One of the main issues that I see as a problem here is simply a loss of rural voice. The riding which I am located in presently is S-D-G & East Grenville, which is sort of a three-and-a-half-county riding, but it is a rural riding. Under the new arrangement, if it comes to pass, we will suddenly be 25,000 to 30,000 rural people in a roughly 80,000-person riding. The simple fact is that Cornwall will become by far the dominant centre in terms of numbers, voters and everything else, and the essence of that rural voice which we've had and which we have under the present situation will be lost.

Related to that, I have to in my own mind ask the question about the savings that are predicted from this decrease in numbers. I go back to my teaching career when midway through my 10 years as a secondary school teacher, roughly midway through that career, was the time the school boards went from the old local boards to the regional or in our case the three-county board. Exactly that same reason for creating the large boards was behind that move in 1969: "We'll save money."

Well, it did anything but save money. It was only six months later that you could see the changes occurring in the particular school I was employed in at the time. The old board locally had operated with a volunteer board and one half-time employee. If you go to that jurisdiction now, and I suppose it's apt to get bigger rather than smaller, and divide the number of board staff employees by the number of schools it serves, you'll find that the bureaucracy has increased somewhere between 15 and 20 times from that pre-amalgamation or pre-getting-big-and-efficient situation to the present situation.

It simply doesn't work. Besides, at the same time as the costs escalate, the representation or the feeling that the local people have of connection with those institutions goes by the boards. That is exactly what I see happening with this change in the boundaries of our ridings, that same tendency.

I'd like to say, lastly, that equality is a lot more than numbers. Just listening to what was being discussed here 10 or 15 minutes ago, I think some of those comments were very appropriate. Equality also involves population density and distance and things like that.

I was looking back to the records from the Ontario Legislature where about three years ago Mr Villeneuve, our present MPP, was making a case for — I hate to use the words “common sense,” but I'll use them anyway, if and when the next electoral commission were to redistribute the ridings in Ontario. One of the things he asked for was to recognize the difference between urban and rural population densities.

Second, he said, “Rural areas have been and are being” — now, this is three to four years ago — “simply tagged on to the nearest urban centre and carried along with it.” That's exactly what's happening. “As a result, rural concerns tend to be ignored.”

He was proposing at that time that when boundaries were changed again in the future the idea of three different types of ridings be considered — a rural riding, an urban riding or a rural-urban riding — with different population boundaries or numbers being taken into consideration for those three different types of ridings. I think that was pertinent then and I think it's still pertinent despite what Mr Harris seems to want to do.

Mr Réjean Pommerville: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, MPPs from the Legislature of Ontario, my name is Réjean Pommerville. I'm from Russell county here, the neighbouring county. I'm also the president and director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for my county. It's a great opportunity for me to be here this afternoon to talk to you about agriculture. I'm not going to give the same talk as my two predecessors. I will talk about OMAFRA cuts and what they may represent for us. Being an agricultural organization, we have to represent our members, the farmers of this great province of ours.

If I take my county, for example, last year we lost our OMAFRA offices in Embrun in Russell county. They called it an amalgamation, two counties together. Now Prescott and Russell are together, located at the Alfred College. It's a cutback to the agricultural sector, because instead of having the staff people of two OMAFRA offices, now we have one ag rep and some support staff for the two counties. Distancewise, lots of people will not travel for over an hour to go meet with their ag rep, because sometimes it's too time-consuming. This is one of the reasons we believe that the cuts at OMAFRA should stop. We believe that the 15% to 20%, or even the 35% the Harris government was thinking of at the beginning, is inappropriate.

1430

Distance is very important. Personal contact is also very important. If I take, for example, the changes that happened to crop insurance in the past, a lot of people are getting away from crop insurance because they don't have personal contact any more with the people who used to be the crop insurance agents, who used to go farm to farm each spring to collect crop insurance. That's one aspect. We don't want to lose any more of our OMAFRA budget. It is very important for us, and we shouldn't have any more cuts.

With the size of the riding, with Glengarry, Prescott and Russell now, you're going to be talking about over an hour of travelling for the MPP who's going to be in that area. If the people are going to be able to meet with their MPP, it's going to be very difficult for this person to be responsible, to be — disponible, en français — available to all the people. They will not be able to meet as many people because of travelling time; you can go only so fast. I don't think the Harris government intends to give everybody a chopper or something like that to meet in their riding. I don't think that's the purpose of this whole issue. The personal contact is still very important for the people of rural Ontario. That's what I want to say in finishing.

Mr Runnalls: If I could just add to what Réjean said, it's a double whammy, really. We're going to lose out on the representation to the government, but we're also losing with the Ministry of Agriculture, because we've taken huge cuts, more than anybody else. Actually, with the last government and with this government we've gone down probably way over 50%. We're getting it every way we look.

Mr Patten: Thank you very much for being here today. I haven't got much time, so I'll speak quickly. I'd like to address your two points and support you on your perception. What do we mean when we say “representation”? What I gather you are saying is that not only do we lose — and I was just doing the figures while you were talking on that issue. The north, the east and the west, outside of suburbia and the urban areas, are all the big losers in this. The big gainers are suburbia and the urban environment and around the Toronto area.

You know as well as I do, or I know as well as you do, that when you're outside the Toronto area and you try to get your point of view across, it's like fighting all the time. Sometimes you begin to think it's the province of Toronto rather than the province of Ontario. That's the feeling in many of the regions of this province.

Your double hit is what you say in terms of agriculture, but also you're going to lose representation from the rural areas and then you're going to be dominated within this larger riding by an urban area. You lose that cultural perspective that is important to maintaining a way of life and the full range of diversity in Ontario. What we're going to have is just one big urban view out of centralized Toronto. I don't think that's going to serve the people of Ontario very well. Would you like to comment on that?

Mr Runnalls: You're hitting it right on. We hear of a city state and that sort of thing. As we go back to what we said before, so much comes out of the rural area that a lot of people don't appreciate.

Mr Marchese: Mr Runnalls, I want to tell you that I'm from a riding in downtown Toronto. We appreciate agriculture a great deal. I want to tell you that in most Italian gardens we have vegetable gardens; in most Portuguese gardens there's a vegetable garden; Chinese and so on. We appreciate it. We may not be living out in those rural areas, but we have a good sense of —

Mrs Marland: You have Fort York in your riding, don't you.

Mr Marchese: I've got the fort as well.

I appreciate the comments you made about M. Villeneuve. When he was in opposition obviously he felt very strongly about it, and now we're not sure what he thinks as a minister; he and many others. But the arguments he advanced are as relevant today as they were then; nothing has changed. The comments of Mr Garlough are relevant where he says equality is more than numbers; he's quite right. We don't achieve fairness by simply having one member, one vote. It's not necessarily how you achieve equality. That, again, applies to the comments of M. Villeneuve. By the way, we, the NDP, don't do well in the rural areas. It's not that we have a stake in this and it's not because we didn't put enough money there. As you were saying, perhaps you lost out with us. We treated agriculture fairly, I think. It's not for votes that we're doing this, but I think you have advanced the right argument, that distance is a problem and geography is a problem. If we don't take that into account, there will be many losers in the next election. I think there's time for comment.

The Chair: A quick comment.

Mr Garlough: Mr Chairman, if I could, I had wanted to make a comment in relation to Mr Patten's comments earlier, and it was simply that if you look currently, I believe the provincial government has six hearings on the education revisions for high school. If you put those six pinpoints on a map where hearings are being held, you'll get some idea of how far things move out of Toronto. As far as I could see, the farthest distance away from Toronto of the hearings were Kingston and North Bay.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, gentlemen. The united counties have been well-represented here today. I just wanted to speak very briefly, because I agree with everything Mr Garlough said today, but there's an interesting schedule at the tag end of the federal report, the actual riding boundary commission report that changed theirs, which have now become the template for us. In fact, everything that now-Minister Villeneuve asked for is reflected. As you go through the ridings, you'll find that every riding in the north is 20% below the average of what rep by pop right across the province would be, with the exception of two urban centres up there. Sudbury is only 10% less than average. Sault Ste Marie is 16% below. All of the urban-rural are roughly between 7% below and average. All of the urban seats are at the average or above. In fact, you'll find that many of the Toronto ridings have a population 10% or more above what a strict distribution in the province would be.

With the greatest of respect, and we've heard this a number of times — the minister's resolution back in 1992 — the federal boundary commission embraced those concepts when they defined these ridings, and while we may need to look at some of the specific boundaries as time goes on — I don't quibble with that — I think there is a reflection in the different workload and the different realities across the three types of ridings.

Mr Runnalls: There's still distance and there's still a vast diversity in the rural ridings, which maybe are still not noted.

Mr Gilchrist: I certainly agree with that.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate your input here this afternoon.

CHRIS BOWES

The Chair: Our next presenter is Chris Bowes. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Chris Bowes: I'd like to begin by welcoming everyone to the most overgoverned city in the world. I'm speaking to you from that perspective. My background is economics and law. I'm pretty much an urban dweller. I live in Ottawa South, which will be one of the largest ridings population-wise in the province and in the country.

The main things I want to speak to are the issues of economics, the symbolism that going to federal boundaries will bring to the two different issues related to representation, which seems to be a key point that many of the speakers have brought up, and my own personal observations I've had, being somewhat politically active — we're all political animals of some kind — and some of the things that revolve around those observations.

1440

The economics of the situation is that we'll save \$11 million initially. We may not think that is a big sum when you look at the total provincial budget, which is in the tens of billions of dollars, but it's these small things, these small items, these small savings that can make the difference as to whether this province is going to be able to service education and health in the long run.

I don't know how many of you drove up here. This part of eastern Ontario, as part of the province, has not been well served in the past. We're just finally getting a highway built that should have been built years ago. That kind of saving, by reducing members of the Legislature, could be applied to things like actual infrastructure. A highway like that will help many rural ridings in this part of this province, giving better access. That seems to be one of the main things you keep hearing about: representation and access.

Why not utilize a duplicate federal bureaucracy to do the exact same thing the elections commission would be doing in Ontario? It just makes sense. We're already paying for it. It will work well, as was pointed out by Mr Gilchrist. In the appendix many of these things about the rural-urban split are addressed. Being of an economics background, I think good government is efficient government and that it's in the interests of all people, whether they're rural or urban, that their government deliver services efficiently and as inexpensively as possible. I understand some of the concerns. I have many relatives who live in rural ridings, farmers themselves. If you told them the name of this act they'd get a chuckle out of it and they'd agree with everything it's trying to do.

That brings me on to the issue of symbolism. Some who oppose this have said it's just political hype, it was just a promise — shouldn't keep your promises. I think that would damage the government. That is the kind of attitude that has damaged governing in this country, that one should keep promises only if it's pragmatic. After you get elected you should keep your promises, and symbolizing of representation — I don't agree with the idea of a one person, one vote kind of model. The idea that there would be over 100,000 people living in my

riding versus another riding where it's, say, 20% less and comes in at 80,000 people, I think 20,000 people would have been disfranchised. They are not adequately represented, and some realities have to be faced when setting these kinds of criteria.

I think that through technology and access you can improve access. Saving \$11 million, say, if you were to take 10% of that \$11-million saving, \$1 million, and reinvest it into constituency support services, make it easier for rural people to get hold of people in Queen's Park or have more things like these committee hearings — which I might add always seem to meet during the middle of the day instead of in the evenings, when you'd probably find you'd get more public input — a 20% reduction in the number of MPPs would be a powerful symbol to say, "Members of the Legislature are not immune to the same market or economic factors that everyone else in this province is facing."

I've been a factory worker. I will have a degree shortly. I just have to apply for it. I have been downsized three times in three different jobs: a white-collar job, a blue-collar job and as a consultant. To me it would go a long way in giving some moral leadership value to the Legislature to show some resolve on these matters.

Also as an item of symbolism, in this city I elect as an elector two city councillors and two mayors. If you're going to try to reduce some of the government expenditure, the waste, especially in urban areas — I can't speak to the rural concerns about some of the municipal concerns — this would be a powerful symbol to people who are sitting on our city council in this city, our regional council: "Look, if the province can do this, you can do this. You should do this." It would set a standard for school boards, it would set a standard for municipalities across this province that they should meet this, that it's a good thing and it's a way to deliver efficient services.

Particularly, there's the idea that more representation makes government better, makes accessibility better. I submit, on the basis of any regional municipality across this province where you have these explosions of representatives, that this is not necessarily true. More doesn't always equal better access. What equals better access, I believe, is the quality of people who are running for those offices. Accessibility to the process, this kind of stuff, this kind of forum, if I were an MPP I would try to hold monthly town halls in my riding to get people's responses to things. I think that's better government. As far as distances, as I said, a small reinvestment in technology from the savings could easily compensate much of these rural problems: 1-800 numbers. You look at most of the rural members around the Ottawa area and they have 1-800 numbers for their constituency offices. It's time to bring some aspects of political consultation up into the 20th century before we get into the 21st century.

This brings me to personal observations. When you look at my riding, the federal boundaries cut across the provincial riding of Ottawa Centre, Ottawa South and Ottawa-Rideau. I've worked on campaigns. You talk to people, they phone you up, and they have no idea what

riding they're living in. A good example: I live almost on the dividing line between Ottawa-Rideau and Ottawa South. We were getting phone calls and people didn't know whom they were voting for, "Am I voting for Garry Guzzo or am I voting for Linda Thom?" I actually had phone calls in our campaign office asking who the Liberals were running in the riding. They had no idea. They would phone up and they'd say, "I'm in Ottawa South," and you'd have to go through this, "Where do you live, what part of the city?"

I also believe that the federal boundaries are much better at representing the true demographics of this province. With all due respect to some of the rural people, the fact of the matter is that this province is an urban province. The majority of Ontarians live in those urban areas and they deserve to be properly represented.

With regard to some of the comments from rural people, I've got relatives strewn across this province, from Ottawa-Carleton all the way down to Oxford county, up to Elliot Lake, and I haven't heard one who is worried about losing representation in the Legislature of this province. What they want to see is government that functions more efficiently, that addresses their real concerns. As I said before, more politicians are not going to make access better. There are more concrete ways to deal with that. People in this province want real issues solved. As I said, just look at any regional municipality in this province. Big government, more politicians, does not necessarily work.

1450

In summary, I'd say it makes sense economically. We have to start cutting some things that it makes sense to cut. To me the example given of the \$11 million is that this is a fixed cost of government. If you can get the fixed costs down, you will free up more resources to spend on variable costs such as health care, education and infrastructure. Also it would show leadership by the Legislature to many levels of government in this province that it should be done. Your self-interest to be elected or keep your position — hey, we took cuts; you should do it too.

It would also, I think, make the process much more accessible to the electorate because you would be eliminating a lot of the confusion in different areas where people have no idea what riding they're in. Most people in Ontario, I find, gravitate to federal matters in that way and they think, "Oh well, I live in this federal riding, so the provincial riding is the same way." So you would be lessening confusion, a good thing. It makes government more accessible.

Basically I'd just like to thank you for letting me have this opportunity to speak.

Mr Marchese: I've got about eight questions. You said the urban areas deserve to be better served because it's becoming more and more urban. How does decreasing by 27 members help them?

Mr Bowes: When you look from a political science standpoint, from some of the stuff I've read, one way to weaken legislative government is to put more people in the Legislature. It weakens government. Most first-year poli-sci stuff will show that.

Mr Marchese: I don't see the connection between what you said and how reducing numbers helps, but let me move on to another quick one.

Talking about boundaries, once we consolidate the boundaries, people will then be able to know the boundaries, is your assertion. Is that correct?

Mr Bowes: Yes.

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure about that. I want to ask you the final question, because we won't have much time. You're an economics student, you say.

Mr Bowes: Yes.

Mr Marchese: I asked Mr Stairs the same question, and we had a difficult exchange with that one, but I said to him — since you're a student of economics you would appreciate this much more perhaps — the Provincial Auditor has identified \$5 billion of moneys that business isn't paying because we don't have enough auditors to go and check these things out and pursue them to be able to get what he argued we should be getting as a government. The government aggressively went after the social assistance recipients with a 22% cut, and this is something the auditor identified as a big problem. What do you think about that?

Mr Bowes: One of the main problems we're facing in this province is allocation of resources, and economics comes down to basically that premise. Economics is the study of the allocation of resources.

Mr Marchese: Right, so we'll save another \$1 million, then we'll be able to hire those people to go after those \$4 billion or \$5 billion. Is that what you're arguing?

Mr Bowes: If we don't get our interest payments down and get some control on government spending —

Mr Marchese: I appreciate that. I just wondered what your view was of this.

Mr Bowes: — we'll be forced to cut even more.

Mr Marchese: Yes, but your answer to the \$5 billion we're not collecting from business is that we don't have the resources to go out and collect them and audit. What do you say about that?

Mr Bowes: It's part of a much bigger plan. You have to look at everything, and that's my point. Some people would say that \$11 million really isn't that substantial, but it's the small things. Many of my friends are in small businesses and I've done some small business stuff as well. It's these small fixed costs that eat up your ability to respond to things like this.

Mr Hastings: Why do you suspect that the political and bureaucratic élites somehow ought to be immune from any kinds of reductions?

Mr Bowes: That's why I say "symbolism." I thought by taking this kind of reduction, 20%, in the number of positions, this would show that they are not immune.

Mr Hastings: I'm just thinking of the whole thing. There seems to be an argument with colleagues here and out in society that somehow it's so sacred, the public sector, you can't change them at all hardly.

Mr Bowes: I don't agree with that. I don't believe anyone should be immune. To me, it's wrong to expect people to take cuts and not be willing to take some of the brunt of those cuts yourself. I think that's a powerful symbol. It gives moral suasion to the arguments you're making for allocation of resources.

Mr Maves: Quickly, one of the ways I guess you could get \$5 billion or whatever the number is of uncollected taxes is to hire more people in the finance department to help catch those people, which we've done. We've hired 168 more people, so that's something the Provincial Auditor showed and we're addressing.

The other thing is that when you have more members — federally I worked for a member and there were 172 members that he had to go into caucus with and try to find one or two opportunities to get a say. Provincially, we have 82. I have a lot more opportunity to have my say. Is that what you meant?

Mr Bowes: Yes, basically. I bet everyone here has been on some form of committee. I've done a lot of different volunteer stuff, and the easiest way to destroy the best intentions of a committee is to get so many people on it that you never can get anything accomplished. It's the joke about the committee that went to draw a horse and they ended up with an elephant in the end.

Mr Patten: Thank you for coming and sharing your views. Let me ask you this question. Which province do you think is the most frugal in terms of its number of MPPs related to its MPs?

Mr Bowes: I'm not too sure of that figure. I haven't really looked at the other provinces in that sense.

Mr Patten: Believe it or not, right now Ontario leads the way. We have 99 MPs and 130 MPPs versus, for example, BC, which has 75 and — where was that other figure? I forget what it was. With a population base that's one third of Ontario's, Alberta has 83, with 17 MPs. Right now Ontario is the most frugal, and some would say if you did a comparison — because how are you going to compare? You compare province to province — you would say that right now Ontario is underrepresented.

My concern is that there's an economic symbolic gesture here, which I think is what it is at the beginning, but as I look more deeply into the issue of what that system is there to do, it's there to represent people. The closer I look at the nature of representation and the complexity of what that really means — I don't care what the feds have just done in terms of redrafting the map. I don't think we're there yet. So I don't think we have a perfect system, that's for sure, but I don't believe this is going to give us the best point of view of relating to people.

By the way, MPPs were cut back in the budgets for their two offices, cut back in their own salaries. They lost the pension plan; they don't have one now. So there are a lot of symbolic gestures that have gone on. I appreciate that and I take no issue with that, but I am concerned about the quality of representation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Bowes. We do appreciate your being here this afternoon and giving us your input.

Okay, back to the drama. Mrs Marland, we're going to discuss your motion again.

Mrs Marland: I have learned that this kind of decision has been made by the Chair before without a motion of the committee. If that is so, my motion isn't necessary. I would be quite happy for the Chair to make the decision. Whether it was you or a previous Chair, the deci-

sion has always been made before that this kind of allowance has been made for groups to appear before a committee. So I'm confident about the decision that would be made and my motion would be redundant.

The Chair: So you're withdrawing your motion?

Mrs Marland: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent that the Chair make the decision?

Mr Maves: No. I still want to speak to this.

The Chair: Okay, if there's no unanimous consent for the Chair to make the decision, I guess we —

Mr Maves: I want to speak to it before you put that motion, that's all. I was on the list.

The Chair: Did that require a motion?

Mr Maves: No, before you ask for unanimous consent, can I not speak?

The Chair: Just for a point of clarification, Margaret has withdrawn her motion, okay? I'm asking for unanimous consent.

Mr Maves: Okay, on a point of order, then, before that.

Mr Gilchrist: Actually, it would be a point of order.

Mr Maves: I'm not being difficult whatsoever, Mr Chair. When this committee very first sat — I can't remember the bill; it might have been job quota repeal — we had a gentleman fly in from Ottawa and he sat down and said, "Here are my costs, by the way, that I'd like to be reimbursed." He had a plane flight and he had a hotel for Toronto and he had return train fare. At that time, we had this debate about whether or not we should be reimbursing people. At that time we debated it, we said maybe we should for travel costs, but not stay; maybe we should, but it should be the lowest cost to get to the site; maybe we should, but if there were hearings in the city the person came from, they couldn't get payment.

As I remember, the subcommittee was going to discuss this and try to come up with a policy for the general government committee. I just wonder if that ever occurred. Maybe it should occur so that we wouldn't have to bring these debates to the floor in the future.

The Chair: That discussion has never occurred because there has never been the same subcommittee; it's always a different subcommittee for every bill that goes out, so it always becomes an issue to be dealt with. We have very few requests. We haven't had one for the last two or three bills. So there's no general rule that seems to be acceptable except, in our opinion, we have never said no on this particular committee.

Mr Marchese: If I can, we've also allowed the clerk some discretion in terms of how they deal with this, generally speaking, so that we don't have to have these kinds of debate all the time. I think they by and large determine what is probably reasonable or unreasonable, and there are some unreasonable requests that we probably all agree with and we leave it to the Chair and the clerk to make that judgement. But if we bring every question here, I think it's a problem.

Mr Gilchrist: Just give me 10 seconds on a point of order. I'm going to be indicating that I personally would be in favour of allowing the Chair, but I would just ask that consideration be given this time, in the absence of a

general policy, to the mileage component. I have no problem with that. If the clerk could, if she hasn't already arranged scheduling for Dryden for that day, arrange that this group could meet in the middle of the day so that the drive in and the drive home can be done in daylight hours, I'm completely comfortable with this.

The Chair: The interesting thing is to give the authority to the Chair and then to second-guess the Chair's authority.

Mr Stewart: We would never do that.

The Chair: That's exactly what it is, second-guessing the Chair's authority. Mr Stewart?

Mr Stewart: First of all, I want to clarify. I made the comment that the House leaders should be looking into that. I understand that's not the way it should be.

Whether we pay or we don't pay is not my concern. My concern is that there should be some type of precedent or some type of rule of thumb or some type of general policy created at the start of each of these hearings. To try and make these decisions halfway or a quarter of the way through the hearings is not the way to go. Whether it be done through the Chairman or not, that's again not the point, but you should have a general policy. There should be some type of precedent set and adhered to. But to do this halfway through I do not think is the right way to go.

The Chair: I agree with you, Mr Stewart. This request was just received. Some committees deal with this different ways. Some committees say no to every request; other committees say yes to every request. In the absence of a particular policy, I felt it necessary to bring this particular issue to the committee. Now, do we have unanimous consent for the Chair to make the decision on this particular request?

Interjections: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, fine. Thank you very much.

Is Frank Cauley in the room? He is scheduled for 3:20, so we will recess until 3:20.

The committee recessed from 1504 to 1539.

MARIANNE WILKINSON

The Chair: Our last presenter for the day has arrived, Marianne Wilkinson, president of the Ottawa-Carleton Council of Women and president of the Kanata Beaverbrook Community Association. Welcome, Mrs Wilkinson. We appreciate your coming this afternoon. The floor is yours.

Mrs Marianne Wilkinson: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Although I'm president of those two associations, I didn't know about this hearing in time to have meetings with them. I've talked with some of them and they are greatly concurrent with what I'm saying, but I'm not speaking for the associations in what I'm going to say today. I'm speaking as an individual.

When the federal redistribution was going on, I actually made presentations at that time to the commission that was doing the changes in the federal boundaries because it was important to me that my community, which is the city of Kanata, was all together in one riding, and that is the case now. It wasn't originally that way. But the number of ridings is really, I think, more at

issue here. In talking with people about it, they feel there could be a lot of advantages to having both the provincial and the federal being the same. There's a certain degree of confusion that comes out. Our particular riding goes this way federally and this way provincially, so that we're actually being pretty well cut in half. I'm in the provincial Carleton riding at the moment and the federal Lanark-Carleton. So there is a significant change coming to our community.

I was talking with one of the offices today about something else and they said they still get inquiries. People get confused about where they are, who looks after them, who's representing them. I think some of this degree of confusion could be eliminated if you have the two together. If you were talking about municipal boundaries, I wouldn't be saying the same thing as I'm saying now. I really think that, philosophically, in today's age, with the kinds of communications we have, the kind of transportation systems we have, the way we can get information back and forth, we have to look at the level which is — and I consider the federal and a lot of the provincial to be more policy-oriented types of governments. You don't actually do the services as much. You don't plow the roads in most cases; on the highways you do. The municipalities are providing services on a very narrow location thing and they need to have smaller and more intimate types of direct contact with the people.

1540

The federal and provincial are fairly similar in that they have to keep in contact, but there are a lot of different ways they can do that these days that you couldn't do even 10 years ago. It makes some sense that if the federal and provincial members have the same boundaries, they might even have the pleasure that they would talk to each more and perhaps go jointly together to talk to people in the community so that the people would have a better understanding of who does what, which is often very confusing. I was at one point mayor of the city of Kanata and I used to get calls all the time on items that were either provincial or federal. We had to become walking encyclopaedias of who did what. Because we were handy, we were there, if they had a problem they would call us and we would learn to do it. People don't like being told to call somebody else, so we'd have to usually send the information through. There is a lot of merit in how you could administer things if you had the same boundaries.

I don't think the reduction in numbers is going to cause a significant problem. It's nice to have ridings that aren't too large, and it is a bit of a problem in the north even though the populations of their ridings are going to be smaller. They're just huge territories. Our particular riding is one that's half very urban. Kanata is high-tech city, highly educated, high incomes, very fussy etc, and we're next to an extremely rural area, a poverty-stricken rural area around Perth, poor farm land areas; interesting, very small communities, lovely little communities, but they have quite a different lifestyle. It's amazing how well you can get along even though you're quite different, and it's sometimes very advantageous to put people together like that, because maybe people get to under-

stand Canada better and know the differences between one part and the other.

I don't have any problem with what's being done here. It could work extremely well. I don't really see having the need to have double commissions going around and redrawing boundaries because that also gets confusing. For the people who take an interest in these things, there are only so many meetings we can get to. We don't get paid for this type of thing and we have other businesses we have to carry on. It's quite a strain to make double presentations when one would do. The process would be the same, so there's a little bit of money saved there, not a lot, when you look at your total budgets, but it causes things always to be done together.

That's my general feeling on the change and I'd be glad to answer any questions if you have any. I'm very familiar with all the ridings in this area because I now sell real estate, which means I travel. At one point, I was chair of the regional planning committee and had a lot of work to do with the entire area.

Mr Stewart: Thank you very much for your presentation. We've heard today that some of the people from the rural ridings feel that they will not be represented well. One of them was Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry, with the possibility that Cornwall goes in. Of course, the thought is that because the concentration of population is in Cornwall, Cornwall is going to be the one that's going to elect the next MPP, so the fact is that the rural areas are going to get the short end of the stick. I look at some of the areas near where I represent. The city of Peterborough is in the new riding. I don't represent the city of Peterborough; I'm from the rural part of the Peterborough riding. Victoria is the same thing. Barrie's the same thing. What are your thoughts on that? Do you think that the rural community will be at a disadvantage?

Mrs Wilkinson: I actually find that the rural people tend to dominate the urban rather than the other way around. Rural people tend to be much more interested in politics. They had a nomination meeting about 10 years ago, in 1983, for a riding. It was Nepean and some rural areas, and I would say probably 75% urban and 25% rural. That nomination was won handily by a rural person, because they bused all the rural people in and the urban people, being so busy, didn't bother to come. I've seen that in other places. If the rural people want to, they can do it.

The other thing is that it makes sense for people to get together. They're all people when you get right down to it and their aspirations aren't significantly different. They live in a different type of lifestyle, but as people they're not different. It brings them together. I'm in a mixed urban-rural riding now. Kanata is with Goulbourn, Osgoode and Rideau. They're all rural townships, and now we're going to go with different rural townships. To me, it doesn't make a lot of difference. We've never had any problem. Norm Sterling is my member right now. He lives in a rural township and he represents the entire city of Kanata, which is now 50,000 people. He's never lived in Kanata; he has never lived in the urban part of the riding.

Mr Stewart: The reason I ask that is that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is very concerned about that. I

must agree with you, I think you're absolutely right. As I look now, many of them from the rural areas are those MPPs who are representing, even though there's a good urban group —

Mrs Wilkinson: We always call them Sand, Dust and Gravel — that's not very nice — SDG. There also is a problem there. You have francophones and anglophones, and there are a lot of things in that area that are perhaps different from the rest of the province. But those people — I've known them a long time — can look after themselves.

Mr Stewart: I rather assume so.

Mr Gilchrist: Very briefly, thank you for coming this afternoon, Mrs Wilkinson. You mentioned that as a former mayor you have municipal experience as well. Something we haven't talked about yet in the hearings to date: There are going to be some obvious operational efficiencies by going to common boundaries. I think most people would see as a likely consequence that we'd be able to have one voters' list. You'd have common mapping, common poll design. Presumably the same apartment buildings would be lumped together and the same streets could be put into the same polls as well, and at some point down the road maybe even shared staffing and the deputy returning officer and poll clerks and the like.

I wonder whether there are even further benefits to be derived from that cooperation that would see us able presumably, because the federal government has already announced that it's moving to an electronic voters' list, to take that electronic voters' list and also utilize that at a municipal level if we could frame the municipal wards as some kind of a subset of provincial ridings; for example, half of a provincial riding or a third, but at least you'd have some commonality in the boundaries. Would there be any merit in also looking at saving enumeration costs and staffing costs at the municipal level?

Mrs Wilkinson: There are some differences municipally that would be a problem. One is that you can vote in more than one municipality, but you can only vote provincially or federally once. If you have property in any municipality you can vote in that municipality, so you have a lot of people on the voters' list who are not resident. Therefore, you wouldn't be able to use exactly the same voters' list.

In urban areas the division of percentages in polls and things might work all right. In rural areas it wouldn't because you have not just population but also size, and you see that in northern Ontario. You have to be extremely careful about that type of thing. It's an optional thing that could work in some areas. I would hate to see it ever mandated, because I think it could cause serious problems. In the very rural townships that would really cause some grief, and I would support them on that, because you need a little bit of local autonomy for that type of thing.

1550

Mr Patten: Good to see you, Marianne; a long time.

Mrs Wilkinson: Hi, Richard.

Mr Patten: Your argument revolves, as you've expressed it so far, around some of the benefits of reducing the confusion that people have. There are some

things that, if adopted — and I expect they will be — will be some cost saving for the province. But when we look at representation, which it seems to me is why we elect people, I have some concerns.

We had a mayor and a reeve today who were concerned that the new riding boundaries would be divisive in terms of their municipalities, so they'd have four people they would have to relate to, and that culturally, in terms of what Gary was just talking about — Stormont-Dundas — the mix and the sense of heritage and the sense of the infrastructure they have now is going to be somewhat lost in the grand scheme of things. While I agree with you on the feistiness of the rural area, the whole pattern is now urbanization. The big winner in this representation-wise is suburbia and the cities. The rural areas and the north are losing representation numerically and because of the increase in geography. I worry about that. It makes it much more difficult.

Do you have any views related to the resources? Do you think the resources of the MPPs should be similar to the resources of the federal representatives as well?

Mrs Wilkinson: I don't know all the details. I have a general idea because I know a lot of MPs and MPPs. Particularly in the north, you have to take account of area and representation. You're in a central city area; it's easy for you to get around. But the person who's up, say, for Renfrew, which is a very large, spread-out rural area without good air flights and the rest of things — you don't have those types of things — might require more travel budgets and things of that nature, long-distance calls and all those things that would go with it because they'd have to have 1-800 numbers in those areas. There are additional costs, and that's something that should be looked at.

It's very important that we have representation. I'm a grass-roots person and a strong believer in representation, but I'm also a strong believer in balancing the bottom line. Municipalities have always had to do it because the province legislated it. I was always wishing that we could legislate it back to the province. You wouldn't be the problem you're in today if we had done that. That has to be looked at and accepting a blanket one other than accommodation, which I guess doesn't apply to Toronto people, is probably not the way to go.

Mr Patten: Did you have a chance to see the actual draft of the legislation?

Mrs Wilkinson: I haven't seen the legislation. I've got the map because I had the federal ones from before.

Mr Patten: If you take my word for it, there is no mechanism for flexibility. It uses terminology like "identical to the federal system."

Mrs Wilkinson: That's for boundaries, you mean.

Mr Patten: Yes, for boundaries. If indeed it's true that different jurisdictions have different responsibilities, different needs, this sort of thing, it seems to me important that if you're going to go this route, at least have the flexibility to make — they may be minor adjustments overall, but they're highly significant in the minds of a lot of people who are affected. Provide a provincial adjustment to a generally federal plan because it's in their interests, and that's our responsibility at this level.

Mrs Wilkinson: If you do that you're going right back to another commission and you're going to do the whole thing over again, unfortunately. I think a better system would be that in the next review after the 2001 — it sounds like forever, doesn't it — census, hopefully for the Ontario portion of it, because they usually break it down by province, it will be a joint federal and provincial one, that they do it jointly so that these kinds of considerations could be taken account of right at the time. However, if you start having minor adjustments here and there, you're going to defeat the whole principle of having things so that people know exactly where they are and having the joint lists and all the rest of it. You can get around the problem by having differences in people's budgets and various things. I realize that some communities are more split than others.

Mr Patten: You used to have a committee of adjustment.

Mrs Wilkinson: A committee of adjustment? Yes. It doesn't do quite that thing.

Mr Marchese: Mrs Wilkinson, you talked about two areas that I heard. One is the issue of confusion and that if you have one boundary people will be less confused. I understand that. If you have one boundary people are likely to know that they're in a federal riding as well as a provincial one.

Mrs Wilkinson: Hopefully.

Mr Marchese: That's the point I raise — hopefully — because my suspicion is that in spite of that it will still not solve the issue that people won't know the boundaries. By and large, I've never met anybody in my riding who knows the boundaries from my western end of the riding in Toronto to the east or the north, the fact that it jigs so stupidly up north in one little part. My sense is that they won't know the boundaries, and I'm not sure that really matters to them. I've never met anybody north of those northern boundaries who has said, "I really think we should belong in your riding." So I'm not quite sure that is really an issue in the mind of the public, but this gets talked about as solving the issue of the confusion people have between one level and the other. Do you have a response to that?

Mrs Wilkinson: That's only one factor. There are people who know. I know the ridings in my riding. I've always known them, but that's because I'm politically involved. It is much more difficult in cities. I can never quite figure out where my colleagues' boundaries are, so I understand that. It's different when you're not in a major city. The point of it is that I don't think that having 103 instead of 130 is going to cause serious problems. I think you can handle it by having the resources.

Mr Marchese: I want to get to that as a question, though. That's a separate issue.

Mrs Wilkinson: It comes down to that because if you don't have the common boundaries, then you're probably going to have more MPPs and you start having a whole double system. I don't believe in doing away with provinces because I don't believe in doing away with municipalities. We have a very large, diverse country, and I think we have to have these different forms of

looking after things. If we can simplify it a little bit in some aspects, we should do so. I think the common boundaries for having your voters' lists, because it is a residence vote and things like that, make a lot of sense, but then you have to accommodate that with other things to make sure you get the representation.

Mr Marchese: If you have a permanent voters' list, wouldn't that simplify things? Whether it's in the same boundary federally or provincially, if you have a permanent voters' list, doesn't that simplify everything?

Mrs Wilkinson: A permanent voters' list does a lot to do that, but if you have one permanent voters' list instead of two it's better too, because then people aren't quite sure where they vote. Right now it happens, federally and provincially, that people vote even in different locations and they go to the wrong place to vote sometimes, and if they happen to go near the end of the voting day they lose their vote.

Mr Marchese: I'm just not sure those matters are as significant as we raise them in terms of having to cut 27 politicians to make a point that we solve some little things in the riding around polling stations. I've never found that to be a problem. We tend to find them usually —

Mrs Wilkinson: I've worked as a DRO. It can be a problem.

Mr Marchese: I was a DRO a long, long time ago as well. Anyway, I am not sure these other little problems get solved by causing this great loss, and I think it's a loss. Although you say this might encourage some provincial and federal people to work together, I'm not sure. We have a party politics system in this country, and yes, there is sort of peaceful coexistence between those of us who are of one party and the other, but I'm not sure we're going to work together the way you suggest.

Mrs Wilkinson: I'm not saying being pals, but being cooperative. There's a difference.

Mr Marchese: I appreciate that, and sometimes we do that just to survive with the fact that we have a different person at a different level. In either case, you really believe that reducing the number of politicians by 27 is a good thing.

Mrs Wilkinson: Yes. I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's workable and achievable. You could have lots of politicians; you just put two in each riding and have one male and one female, and that would really equal things, wouldn't it?

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure the Conservative Party would agree with that because they don't like quotas.

Mrs Wilkinson: You've got a couple of Conservative women here.

Mr Marchese: Yes, but they don't like quotas.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Wilkinson. We appreciate your coming forward today with your input.

That being our last presenter for the day, we are recessed — Mrs Marland.

Mrs Marland: Just before we recess, I wonder if I could do a couple of housekeeping things. One is that since I'm only subbing today and reluctantly can't be with you tomorrow on what I understand is both your birthday and Mrs Ross's birthday, I would like to extend

the best of greetings for you on that occasion tomorrow. It's a personal sacrifice for both of you that you're not going to be at home with your family on Saturday, but you're going to be serving your constituents and the people of Ontario as a whole with the other members of the committee.

Because I am subbing, I ask that I might receive a copy of the brief that was submitted by Mr George Currier, the reeve of Maxville, this afternoon. I know that the clerk will get those copies to us when we get back to Toronto.

The final thing I have is that since I may be — I guess I am — the most senior member of the committee here present at the moment and since this morning the leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr Howard Hampton, suggested that perhaps my recollection wasn't what it should be — this was in the debate about whether members would appear before the committee — he did

say I might recall that MPPs appeared before the committee on Sunday shopping. I think it's important — and I'm sorry Mr Hampton isn't still here, but I will tell him personally a week on Monday, you can be assured — for the record to show that I have been able to do some research over the lunch-hour: There were 519 deputations before the select committee on retail store hours in 1987, oral and written. Not one was a member of provincial Parliament.

Interjection: Oh, really.

Mr Baird: You can't trick a veteran legislator, a seasoned legislator.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Marland. On behalf of Mrs Ross and me, thank you very much.

Thanks to the folks in Ottawa who hosted us today and who came forward with their ideas. We are adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in London.

The committee adjourned at 1601.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr John Baird (Nepean PC) for Mr Hardeman
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Tascona
Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South / -Sud PC) for Mr Danford
Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre / -Centre L) for Mrs Pupatello

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River ND)
Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott-Russell L)

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Avrum Fenson, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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Première session, 36^e législature

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Samedi 9 novembre 1996

**Standing committee on
general government**

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 1996 réduisant le nombre
de députés



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Saturday 9 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Samedi 9 novembre 1996

The committee met at 0900 in the Delta London Armouries Hotel, London.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning. We're happy to be in London, along with the Santa Claus parade this morning, to hear some public input on Bill 81.

MIDDLESEX FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: The first presenter this morning, representing the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture, is Jeff Verkley, the president. Good morning, Mr Verkley, and welcome to our committee. You have 20 minutes. Should you allow some time for questions, they would begin with the Liberals. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Jeff Verkley: I'll read through the document that I have presented. I think everybody has a copy here.

The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture has pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the standing committee on general government. The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture is the voice of the farmers of Middlesex county and the surrounding regions, including the city of London. The MFA represents over 2,400 members across the county and its first objective, as stated in the constitution, is "to consolidate farm opinion for the promotion of any activity within the county to improve the welfare of the agricultural industry and those persons within the county depending on agriculture for a livelihood."

Agriculture and rural society: The MFA has long been an advocate of rural issues in Middlesex. Agriculture and rural society are inexorably linked together economically and socially. In order to maintain a vibrant agriculture industry in Middlesex, rural communities must remain strong and dynamic. Part of the manner in which our rural communities have remained vibrant is through the tireless work of our rural members of provincial Parliament in the Ontario Legislature.

Rural representation: The recent actions taken by the provincial government to reduce the number of ridings in Ontario may further constrain the ability of rural Ontario to have its voice heard at the provincial level. Under the Fewer Politicians Act, the number of ridings in Ontario would decrease from the current 130 to 103. As shown in table 1 below, a disproportionate number of the ridings that will be lost are in rural Ontario. As a result, the percentage of rural seats in the Ontario Legislature will decline from the current 25% down to 18%. This comes despite the fact that the percentage of Ontario's population residing in rural areas has remained virtually unchanged for the past 15 years.

Maintaining a rural voice: As stated above, the proposed changes to the electoral map of Ontario may diminish the capacity of rural MPPs to move rural and agricultural issues to the forefront in the minds of government officials. Given that to be the case, it therefore follows that even greater responsibility for raising and administering rural issues will now fall on the shoulders of officials at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This necessitates that OMAFRA be given sufficient resources to meet the needs of agriculture and rural communities if it is to fulfil this role. It is therefore incumbent on the provincial government to stop making cuts to OMAFRA's budget, something which the government promised to do in its policy document the Common Sense Revolution.

Impact on Middlesex county: The proposed boundary changes will make it very difficult for the MFA to represent the county's farm community effectively. Ongoing communication will have to be maintained with three MPPs instead of one, in addition to county federations in Perth, Lambton, Kent and Elgin. While increased communication would certainly be valuable, the funds, staff and volunteer time and energy required to coordinate such an effort would be insurmountable. County federations are composed of volunteers who are already giving everything they can in the name of advocacy, and constituency offices are already extremely busy trying to deal with the varying needs of constituents. This poses a real challenge in terms of keeping three MPPs informed with a consistent message from five county federations of agriculture.

This situation does not allow for recognition of regional differences and the need for a representative who is familiar with the challenges and potential within those areas. Middlesex in particular loses strong representation with the county being divided three ways and packaged off to other ridings. There will be no voice for Middlesex county under the proposed redistribution, and existing lines of communication put in place to advocate the needs

of the farmers of Middlesex will become ineffective. The MFA is satisfied with the current representation: one member working on behalf of a rural riding.

The rural-urban ratio in the proposed ridings of which Middlesex county will be part are also a concern to the MFA. The Elgin-Middlesex-London riding, encompassing St Thomas, Aylmer and the city of London south of the 401, an area which is poised for development, will have a significant urban voice, making it difficult to communicate an agricultural perspective.

The Chair: Thank you. We've got about four minutes per caucus left for questions, beginning with the Liberals.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Thank you for coming out this morning and giving up part of the Santa Claus parade. I have a couple of comments. Some of the Conservative members who are in this area, in a former debate we had on this issue, said that really the people of this area wouldn't be at all concerned about the lessening of a voice for this area and that was because the Conservative members have such a strong line of communication with ministers that it really doesn't matter. Even if there are fewer MPPs, they have an easy way to influence ministers and make sure their message is heard. How do you feel about that comment?

Mr Verkley: If that's the MPPs' viewpoint, that's good for them, but it's hard for even myself, as president of the Middlesex federation, to understand the agricultural sector in its whole and entirety. Bruce Smith has done a great job for us, but if we're going to get backed on to the other counties as far as — we used to have one voice. As it is right now, Bruce Smith speaks for Middlesex, but we're going to be split between three, so we will be only a portion of the other person's riding. If he's representing his riding the way he should, in proportion, it's only a little bit of Middlesex.

To understand Middlesex as an entity on its own takes a lot of work. I think the MPPs are working extremely hard as it is, but that's going to make it even harder. It's going to make them work. The job to understand rural agriculture in today's society and the changes we're going through takes a long time. It's hard to put down into words exactly what that means, but it's a difficult job to understand.

Mrs Pupatello: Can I read to you a quote? I'd just like to know if you agree with this: "As many of the previous speakers addressing this have mentioned, we do not want to see the rural part of Ontario further under-represented." The quote goes on to say: "It was a situation that was addressed by a number of my colleagues, and I certainly agree with them. Rural Ontario must have more, not less, representation."

Mr Verkley: Representation is great if they understand the message. When we get into splitting up representation solely by population, you get that mix again where we start pulling into the south — Elgin stretching up into the city of London to get that population. That really makes that MPP work extremely hard to understand the city of London issues and the rural issues. That's a double job.

0910

Mrs Pupatello: I should tell you that the quote was from Noble Villeneuve, the current Minister of Agriculture. He said that in 1985 as a member of the House.

Mr Verkley: In 1992, he also made another statement there too that I've read through. There's a lot of discussion in there that's still relevant today, and I hope Noble has those same viewpoints and he can bring them across in later discussions.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Thank you very much for coming. It's a difficult situation, I think. Middlesex is one of the ridings that gets chopped up in a very peculiar way. One of the arguments the government is using is that if it's okay for the federal government to have these ridings, then why isn't that sufficient for Ontario? Have you a comment on that?

Mr Verkley: There again you go down into your tiers of responsibility. If I look at my organization, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and my county MFA, I have four representatives on OFA and yet I have a huge body that represents the county. I need that kind of grass roots to understand the issues in the county that I can bring forward to the OFA. If we look at the structure of federal versus provincial, I still think for those issues that we deal with in the province of Ontario, we need that grass-roots opinion to be able to put that voice across.

When we're looking at the national, there are different issues that we talk to, but when we get into Ontario we have a lot of issues that we talk to. I talk to Bruce Smith on a number of issues that I don't talk to Rose-Marie Ur on, and the same down into local councils. There are different issues I talk to those people about, being closer to me, and I still think we need that step moving on up through the system to be able to get that grass-roots opinion. I'd hate to be an MP who didn't understand the people he represents. That's a really tough spot to be in.

Mrs Boyd: The issues are very different, are they? The jurisdiction is different and the issues are different. One of the things that concerns us is the difficulty of relationships with the local level of government. It's hard enough in Middlesex, with the number of township councils and so on. I think most of us have a hope that some of that will get consolidated and make that job easier, but if you're trying to also deal with local governments and local communities over the broad representation that's suggested by the bill, it will be that much more difficult.

Mr Verkley: You just talked about amalgamations and stuff, but when you get into a bigger situation and bigger issues, that's what you generally do, you average out the people you represent. When you start averaging out, you're going to lose something, and if you lose that one important issue, that's a loss. As government, we have to continually seek out those little issues that mean something to an individual and possibly it means something more to someone. When we blend and get more regionalized, the issues get blended as well and you've got to deal with the main issues and possibly not that other issue that really does need work as well.

Mrs Boyd: I certainly agree with you. I have real concerns that what this will mean is a much weaker voice for the families you represent through the federation at Queen's Park. I think that is a concern, because you've talked at some length about the difficulties in any case in a highly urbanized province of trying to clearly get through to most of us, who may not have a rural background, the issues that you're most concerned about.]

would agree with that, and I want to thank you for expressing your view so well.

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): Welcome, Jeff, to the committee this morning. I have to say that I've certainly benefited greatly by the input and support that the federation has provided to me on a number of rural issues, and I hope that's a relationship that we can certainly continue with.

I also have to congratulate you on a successful annual meeting last night with President Tony Morris. To some extent, I was intrigued by your message, in particular your address, where you talked about the need for transparency, relevancy and accountability within your own organization. Those, in part, are some of the objectives of this process, albeit not the whole part.

Would it not be fair to assume, given the comments you made about your own organization and the increased expectations you have of your volunteers, your membership, your executive, that this is a reasonable expectation for MPPs in this province?

Mr Verkley: I don't understand.

Mr Smith: What I took from your message last night is, "Prepare yourselves, members, to become more involved, take control of the pride you have in your industry, in your communities and communicate that to people beyond agricultural and rural communities. It's going to require more time and commitment to do that. Given that scenario, do you not think the message around this proposal is similar in terms of the expectations of MPPs to do more, communicate differently and make of representation what they might? I see it as a very personal issue in terms of how you represent your constituents.

Mr Verkley: There again, I have talked to other people in the province, and sometimes you just don't get through to your MPP. I'd hate to have that message being brought up more as we continue on and we get fewer MPPs.

When I hear someone say, "My MPP just isn't getting it," I try to find out: "What do you mean, he's not getting it? What's the problem there? Is he too busy? Does he not consider your concerns as strongly as" — you've considered our concerns very strongly, and I thought we've worked well together on certain issues; I felt that you as my MPP understood the issues. But if we get to a point where you are swamped with urban issues, you only have so many hours in a day and you have staff people who advise you on all these issues. If we downsize our MPPs, I understand that to do your job in a larger area you would have to get more staff people to understand the issues, and in an electorate system I want to be able to talk —

Mr Smith: I'm sorry. Is that an unreasonable expectation, though?

Mr Verkley: Unreasonable expectation?

Mr Smith: Of MPPs and their staff to understand the issues?

Mr Verkley: No. I expect that you understand your issues. That's why we elect you in, because you understand the issues of each individual, and that's up to the vote. It's hard to put into an actual explanation what expectations are of your MPP, but if it gets downsized to

the point where you get blended out, as Marion said, I think we've got a bigger base to cover and therefore we can only talk about so many issues in one day. If we lose Middlesex's voice in, let's say, your riding as it is right now, I think that would be a loss for us, but that is not to say we don't expect that if it does change, our MPPs wouldn't have to be up on the situations.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Verkley. We appreciate your input here this morning.

PAUL KLOPP

The Chair: Mr Paul Klopp, we get a chance to move you ahead on the agenda, sir. Welcome to the committee hearings. We appreciate your being here this morning.

Mr Paul Klopp: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here today. I recognize a few faces. I used to be on that side. In fact, I think the last time I was at a committee I was on this side. A little bit about that is that I believe the system is good in what you're doing today, and I'm glad the government decided to have hearings. I think it bodes well.

I'm certainly coming from a position that this did strike a chord with me. I know it was in the book on a promise, but I'll deal with that shortly.

For me it's really about democracy. It was alluded to a few minutes ago about Noble Villeneuve, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, a colleague of mine, and I think he could call me a past colleague. You can check with him as you go back home; I think he understood very well, and me, that politics, this business, is that since you're elected you try to represent people. You don't always agree, but you look for the good things and you try to reach compromises. It's not a dirty word. You can check back with him at the end of the day. I think we worked together on some issues, disagreed strongly on many, but fundamentally, when it came to what issues affect rural Ontario and indeed the whole province, I didn't play politics with him and he did not with me.

0920

As I look back here today and see this bill, really to me it's about gerrymandering. That's a term which is nothing new; it was actually coined in Boston, Massachusetts. A governor tried to work hard to get the ridings to look good for him. That's politics. But the people fundamentally disagreed with that. Look at England in the 1830s. People get elected, and sometimes you get thinking: "I know all the answers. I was elected." Sometimes democracy becomes a bit of a hollow ring. I certainly don't want that to happen here.

When I took history lessons on that, it kind of took me back a bit. We have England, and I look at that as a fairly democratic place. The term "gerrymandering" actually came from a governor in Massachusetts in the United States. I just said, "Well, that's one thing we'll never have to worry about in Ontario, in Canada," because we're all immigrants here, basically. Most of us came because we had to leave places because of oppression, the victims, if you will, of governments that weren't really so democratic.

I see a little bit of that in this Bill 81 today. We disguise it as that it's going to save money. Well, I don't

think it's going to save money. We're going to need more staff. There are times and places to save money and there are times and places that you need to have things done and need people and need that education and need the work there. Jeff alluded to that just a second ago.

The Honourable Dave Johnson was here in town a few weeks ago and he said: "There's no problem here with this bill. You're going to keep your three members in London." With respect to Mr Johnson — I played hockey with him and worked with him on many occasions — it almost didn't surprise me. I had my own colleagues who were city-oriented people. You had to educate them. His background is that he's from the city. The rest of the areas, I guess, are just supposed to be kind of, "Take care of it till we can pave it over into a city."

Really, he needs to be told by this committee and by you that it isn't just a matter of, "You still have three members." Somebody mentioned that there's some power. I guess maybe he has some power down there. I can maybe understand that if you get rid of 25 members of provincial Parliament, "That's 25 less people bothering me with their ideas" — the old story, "Don't hit me with facts and interrupt me." But that isn't what democracy is about. I don't think that's why all of you took the time to run. I have great respect for democracy. I respect it so much, that's why I ran a few times, because I believe in the system.

Noble Villeneuve has got some quotes that he brought up in his opening remarks back in 1992. He said this isn't politics, about seats; this is about members. Once you get elected, you represent to the best of your ability and you work with people. He brought that up over and over again in his remarks.

I can hear the argument when you get back to your caucus: "Oh, well, it's just the NDP guys who aren't going to vote for it, or the Liberals. Anybody who comes there, they didn't vote for you anyway, so don't worry about it." Well, this isn't about that. Back then, when I easily could have not supported him, fluffed it off because of the political view, I didn't and many of my colleagues didn't.

I want to just touch on another area. When you're thinking about the issue of votes, I didn't vote for you, that's for sure. But, you know, a lot of other people did vote for you and the idea of the promise. I can appreciate promises. That's an important cornerstone, I hope, for every political party. However, I think very strongly that this wasn't the issue that got you elected. In fact, in the all-candidates meetings, when it was brought up, it really didn't go over very well. Most people thought: "Ah, you know, Mike, you're really overpushing it. You've got lots of other promises. Why do you throw that one in?" I also believe they thought they were electing Progressive Conservatives, who from time to time in the past history of government did listen and did back off things because, you know, it was an idea, everybody has some ideas, but this one just doesn't fly.

If you want to talk about major promises: agriculture. There was a major promise, "No cuts to agriculture," including, because again it was brought up: "But wait a minute, you're going to cut the deficit big-time. How can you do it without touching agriculture?"

"We've figured it out. No cuts to agriculture." It wasn't too long after that my friend Noble Villeneuve had to stand up and say, "Ah, we are cutting agriculture." The argument came: "We were also elected to get rid of the deficit. So be it." A lot more people voted on that promise than on this.

I would argue that yes, you're going to have people come here today, Ontarians for Responsible Government, if they're still around, the front for whatever, and that organization about fair taxes or something, which we're all for, and they're probably going to tell you they support this. But I'll tell you they were going to vote for you anyway no matter what you do, and there are a lot fewer of them than there are of the ones who actually will vote for you down the road.

I certainly hope you can look at this as a non-political issue and look at it for what it is. It really is about people representing areas to the best of their ability. Noble said it best. Read Hansard back in 1992. I'm sure he's looking for support. Jim Wilson, your Minister of Health, I believe was also quite strong and adamant about the whole issue that day. I'm sure he doesn't want to go back to his riding and say, "Oh, well, you know, I was really intent, but I was just kidding, for political reasons." I think he was talking from the soul that day in Hansard. I certainly think that if they see members in this committee as an opportunity in government to come forth with a recommendation, it's a nice idea, but really democracy is a whole lot bigger issue.

If I can close on this, I believe it was Sir Winston Churchill who said, and I'm going to paraphrase it a bit, "You know, democracy is a hell of a way to run a country, but it sure beats the alternatives." For us, we look at efficiencies as money. There was some talk that it's going to save \$5 million. That's the number I heard a long time ago. I think Sir Winston Churchill said it best, or whoever said it. Maybe it isn't as efficient as a dictatorship or whatever, but it's the best system going. It might cost a little bit of money, and we're all looking to save money, but this isn't the place. I think you heard it from Ken Kelly from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. You're going to hear more of it today.

I think Jeff, who knows about trying to run a business — I'm running a business, a farm. I'm taking the time away today to come here because I believe it is important. I think many of you believe it's important. I certainly hope that at the end of the day we will have recommendations that will say we don't need to do this. I think it would only bode well for everyone. I'll leave it at that if there are any questions.

Mrs Boyd: Thanks for coming, Paul. I wonder if you'd tell us a little bit about what you think it means to the people of Huron county. I know you're from Zurich.

Mr Klopp: Hay township.

Mrs Boyd: That's in the middle of the county, to a large extent. But you've got a very specific kind of issue around representation in Huron.

Mr Klopp: I can speak now with some experience. We have a very diverse area. It's agriculture, but it's also small urban. Many of the same issues that affect all counties affect our area. I found that to do your job right, and I think most of you in this room will understand that,

it takes a lot of time, and at the end of the day you still don't get everything done right. There were many times I said that I should have done more on that one issue. But you can only do so many things in a day, and yes, you can only have so many staff. We cut back our staff to try to save money.

I know, more importantly now than ever, that you can't cut members. They're going to make our riding, say, Huron-Bruce. There's enough work for three members, to do things right, let alone get it down to one. We compare federally. At some point you do have to draw lines. I'm not advocating that we've got to go and have 150 members in the province. There is a reality check there. Federally, they've got the whole country to deal with and they have to draw some lines. I think in the Constitution PEI gets at least one or two members — four members, and they don't have 100,000. But again, in democracy there are some things you have to give and take. In our county, and I think it goes right across the whole board, for members to do their job as best they can, we don't need fewer members.

Mrs Boyd: The interests are different, aren't they, federally and provincially?

Mr Klopp: Yes.

Mrs Boyd: The community of interest is different because the jurisdiction is different.

Mr Klopp: I could also say that you need caucus members to get your point of view across. That was one myth that very quickly got blown out of the water for me. Just because you were the NDP and we were all so-called members, man oh man, we all come from different ridings, and people lobby you and all of a sudden your view changes. Only a fool never changes his mind, I think, as some person once said. You need to work together to get points of view across. There were lots of times when cabinet said, "This is the way it's going to be," but by gosh, after we had groups and hearings and as caucuses met, all of a sudden the majority of that caucus felt strongly that wasn't the way to go and things changed, as it should be.

So you need to have as many caucus members as possible. It's nothing against anyone; it's just the system, which is healthy. That's another reason you just can't go and cut out these members. As Jeff referred to, it's not just something that is fictional in a member of Parliament's head; it is a reality.

Laughter.

Mrs Boyd: I was surprised that somebody was laughing. Everybody's caucus may not run in that democratic fashion.

Mr Klopp: The progressive party I used to know did, anyway. I'm sure it can.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Thank you for your presentation today. First, "gerrymandering" is a term used to describe what politicians did when they rejigged boundaries for their own benefit. In this case, we said in 1994 that we were going to accept the federal boundaries. A federal commission, totally arm's length from federal politicians or provincial politicians, went out and toured the country and decided on new boundaries, and they did that in Ontario. How could that possibly be considered gerrymandering by the provincial Conservatives when

they had absolutely nothing to do with the making of the boundaries?

0930

Mr Klopp: I disagree, and I think as this thing unfolds there are going to be more people who see what it can really mean here. You're the government that is putting forth the bill that says, "We're going to follow the federal ridings." I think the arm's-length organization in Ontario didn't recommend that off the bat, because up till this bill they didn't follow the federal lines, so I think I can speak a little history on that. Clearly Noble Villeneuve's motion that day, which was passed by all parties, recognized that governments in Ontario should make sure we start to recognize that you just can't go by rep by pop, that you need to keep other ridings.

You mentioned that you promised it in your book, but again I don't believe for a second that was — if that was the only issue you had run on in 1995, I can assure you I don't think you would have been honoured with being elected. I think most people kind of — and I can speak from that because when the honourable member who is in my riding now kept bringing it up at the all-candidates' meetings and finally at the federation one, I said: "If you're really going to save money, what are you going to do, get elected tomorrow and then quit? Why are you running, for one thing?" That isn't what people want to elect people for. After that, it wasn't brought up any more.

Mr Maves: It's clear that in your opinion we should pick and choose which promises we should keep after we're elected, run on something and then say, "That's not convenient to me so I'm not going to go through with it."

Mrs Papatello: That is what you're doing.

Mr Klopp: You're doing that with the Ministry of Agriculture budget.

Mr Maves: That's incorrect, actually.

Mr Klopp: You have cut it. I'm not going to mince any words about that. It's been done. But the thing is that you have hearings and the people of this province, a vast, vast majority of them, take democracy very seriously because many of them do remember. They came from places that did not have this opportunity. I think they see this for what it can be. A lot of people haven't brought it up yet, but it's out there. Here the government's knocking it down 25, and you can say, "A lot of these are ridings that some of your own members represent," but clearly anyone knows the odds-making game that if you have less players in the pond, less fish that you have to catch, you're going to catch a bigger majority of them, maybe.

So I just want to bring that out, that people are going to see that. I don't believe you wanted that to happen, but I'm just bringing out that this could be a point that will be maybe brought up as this thing evolves if you carry on with this bill. I certainly hope that you back people like Noble Villeneuve and Jim Wilson and a number of them who surely haven't changed their integrity at all and that this bill will go forth as democracy. People understand that. If you go forth and you have hearings and clearly there's a majority of the people who really don't think this is necessary, they're not going to slam you. They're not going to phone you up and say, "Jeepers, you broke

this promise and I'm not going to vote for you." Trust me. That isn't going to happen.

Mr Maves: Trust you? That's what they did to you, I think. Anyway, it's good to know that your whole caucus supported the social contract and backing off the insurance promise.

One thing I want to ask you, though, as someone who's had experience in a caucus: You know that time is limited in caucus and everyone gets a chance to have a say about a certain issue. If you were a member of a caucus of 175 or a member of a caucus of 75 or less, which one would you have more opportunity to put your constituents' views forward in?

Mr Klopp: The one with the 175, because obviously I'd have a smaller riding and I could do a better job.

Mr Maves: You'd have more opportunity in caucus to say things, in a two-hour caucus —

Mr Klopp: Then you really are talking something worse than gerrymandering. Are you saying that really you should only have one person in charge? Then it would be a lot easier, if you only have a cabinet of one. Is that what you're saying?

Mr Maves: No, not at all.

Mr Klopp: It sounds like it. You're picking smaller numbers. Don't get into that argument, sir.

Mr Maves: Why? It's accurate.

Mr Klopp: Well, you're bringing it up.

Mr Maves: If you have a two-hour meeting and less people, one person can have more comments.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Klopp, you certainly bring a very interesting point of view to the committee this morning. Thank you for coming.

It was said yesterday and it keeps being said today that they are following the federal lines when it comes to redistribution of the boundaries, and that's fine. We have said that we need some changes, but we'd like to see changes to suit Ontario, not to follow the lead of the federal system.

We said to our members here yesterday, especially the north, that there is big change up in the north. The people, especially at this time of the year, cannot so easily reach a particular location to come to public hearings and voice their concerns.

What some of the members said yesterday was that while the federal system gave power to a commission to go throughout Canada and assess the situation and then make their recommendations, after they had the public hearings they also allowed for a seven-month period to have input from anyone as to amendments.

What we have here today is a government that in a month wants to ram this through their way; not the federal way or the people's way, but their way. We are saying we need some changes, but let's look especially at the area that is going to be impacted the most. So when we say that we follow a promise but it's the fault of a system that's already in place, that doesn't go too well with the people of Ontario, because the people of Ontario at this particular time are not having a good opportunity to voice their concerns with respect to rural, urban or northern issues. Can I have a comment from you?

Mr Klopp: I think you've touched on some very good points. If something is as good as what some people who

have brought this forward in the government think it is, why ram it through? If it's such a good-news item, I'd want to carry it on as far as possible. I wouldn't be scared of more discussion. I'm sure many of their members must think the same thing too.

My first hope would be that this bill would be backed off completely. The system isn't as good as it was, it could be better, but at least prove me wrong. I'd love to be proven wrong. Have longer debate. I think the federal one did make some changes, because they found out that, yes, people want money saved etc, but when it comes down to it, there are some things they don't mind spending some money on, and that is on representation of whoever they elect. So I echo your comments and agree with them.

Mrs Pupatello: It was interesting that the Conservative members talked with you just now about how they're not just picking certain promises to keep. I want to reread a statement from Jeff Verkley, the president of the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture. He said: "Given that to be the case, it therefore follows that even greater responsibility for raising and administering rural issues will now fall on the shoulders of officials at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This necessitates that OMAFRA be given sufficient resources to meet the needs of agriculture and rural communities if it is to fulfil this role. It is therefore incumbent on the provincial government to stop making cuts to OMAFRA's budget, something which the government promised to do in...the Common Sense Revolution."

As our critic for OMAFRA, Pat Hoy, from Essex-Kent, tells us, there's a total to date of \$83 million in cuts to OMAFRA. The Provincial Auditor's report that was out last month indicates that if the government were to follow through on recommendations, they'll make additional changes to the colleges that affect agriculture. They'll also likely close more offices of OMAFRA. They'll be making more cuts to OMAFRA, something which Villeneuve in all his term as opposition and as government formerly always said he would not do. In fact, in the Common Sense Revolution, they promised no cuts to agriculture or rural.

The Chair: Our time has expired. Thank you very much for your statement. We appreciate your being here this morning, Mr Klopp.

Mr Klopp: I think there was a little time.

The Chair: Unfortunately, the time is up. Thank you.

Mr Klopp: I appreciate the opportunity. I certainly think everyone should listen very carefully and I look forward to a positive result for everyone's sake.

0940

CATHARINE McLANDRESS

The Chair: Our next presenter is Catharine McLandress. Good morning. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mrs Catharine McLandress: My name is Catharine McLandress. As a resident of Dunwich township, Elgin county, for the last 16 years, I am speaking for rural residents who have worked hard to make their communities healthy places to live.

The provincial government's plan to realign riding boundaries is one of many changes to how the province of Ontario operates that is proposed to save money but doesn't look at long-term costs to the health of all the communities in the province or the reduced quality of life for the people who live here.

I am opposed to the proposed realignment of the riding boundaries on the basis that this is a move that will further weaken the voice and representation of agriculture and rural communities. These have already been weakened through the elimination of 17 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs offices and the similar elimination of many government services formerly available in our county, such as employment offices staffed by people, driver examination offices and community outreach programs.

In southwestern Ontario, the proposed realignment creates huge ridings where the rural areas surrounding London are suddenly attached to pieces of urban areas that really don't have anything to do with them. London is divided into pie-like pieces and each has a large rural area attached to it, sometimes taking in counties they have never shared government with before.

Specifically, in the case of Elgin county, our riding is now swallowed up by a combined London South and southwest Middlesex county riding and stands as an example of why this is a bad move for all the municipalities involved. The candidate elected to the new riding, whether from London or from the former Elgin or Middlesex riding, will have to be a very spectacular person to be able to span the dualities of this urban-rural mix. In other words, if the candidate is from London, he or she will probably have little knowledge of what is going on in Aldborough township or Clachan or Appin. If the candidate is chosen from a rural area, he or she likewise will have trouble comprehending the concerns of the London constituents, because the concerns are different.

Even if the candidate can bridge these differences, if re-election is a goal, the natural tendency is to go with the choices of the greatest part of the population, and it would be hard to imagine that those choices wouldn't go to the urban, or in this case south London, end of the constituency.

The sheer size of these new proposed ridings also begs the question of how good the representation can be when the elected MPP would have to drive for hours to get from one end of the riding to the next to get a feel for what the voters want or need.

These concerns affect not only Elgin county but every rural riding in the province, and the fear is that representation of the rural voice in the province will be all but eliminated. This is dangerous to both urban and rural residents because a healthy infrastructure of agricultural areas and the communities that support them is essential to the health and lifestyle of every Ontario resident.

What is the alternative? The first step is to rid ourselves of the idea that this province, or this country for that matter, can be governed on the basis of population density alone. Because of the wide expanses that make up this province and this country, it has been a given for many years that geography and distance are taken into

consideration. Ontario is an agricultural and a largely rural-based province, and except for the corridor along the major highways, most of the ridings have been considered rural. They have had a voice in their elected MPP. By the same token, the urban areas have been represented by having several ridings within their boundaries, creating a kind of balance, albeit at times uneasy.

Under the proposed riding changes, that balance and the rural voice will be lost because many formerly rural ridings will be slashed on to urban ridings. Make no mistake: It is not in the best interest of the people in the cities to let the rural areas lose their say. If the infrastructure grinds down and the roads, the schools and remaining services are gone, the farmers and other residents won't be there either. This is a circle it only makes sense to maintain.

If the infrastructure goes, it not only affects the trucking of food and agricultural products, it affects the factory worker getting to work, it affects the transport of goods that keep the economy running, it even affects the roads that allows us to go to the cottage and enjoy those rural areas. If this is not enough to convince you of the importance of making geography and distance the consideration of importance instead of population density, consider that the main product produced in rural areas is food. This is essential to all life, urban or rural. Consider the cost of making urban concerns the loudest voice in what are now rural ridings.

In this province it is essential to remember that justice is not a head count. In the name of saving a finite amount of money, the government is running the risk of creating infinite threat to the very health and wellbeing of every resident in Ontario.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Thank you, ma'am, for your presentation. I'm getting the impression here this morning that we are trying to pit urban against rural. I have real difficulty with that, because I don't think most Ontarians are like that or will be like that.

We heard yesterday from a person who said that rural Ontario will survive because rural Ontario has probably put more MPPs in Queen's Park than any other part of this province. If I look at the area that I represent, the big population is Peterborough. I don't live in Peterborough. The biggest population in Victoria-Haliburton is Victoria; the rep is from Haliburton. Look at Owen Sound: represented by Bill Murdoch, rural representative. You go through the whole area. That is not, I don't believe, going to change.

Do you not feel that maybe if there is a good mix of rural and urban in a riding, it may be totally beneficial to everybody? This idea of pitting one against the other has gone on for many, many years, and maybe that should start to stop.

Mrs McLandress: In an ideal world, that would be great, but it's not ideal.

Mr Stewart: I know, but if we don't work at it, do you not think we're just going to make it worse? In the area you represent, have you had both urban and rural representatives over the years?

Mrs McLandress: Yes. Our current representative is from St Thomas, which is considered urban. But St Thomas is not a large city; it's got a very agricultural

background. If you look at Elgin county, it's a hard enough county to manoeuvre around because it's very long, takes in about 50 miles along the Lake Erie shore, so that's never really been an issue. But we don't really have anything in common with what concerns the south London voter. If it resulted in the education of urban people about what it is to live in the country, that would be fine, but I don't think it will.

Mr Stewart: Many of the urban people were originally rural, certainly in the area I represent, and Peterborough is 68,000 people. The other half is rural. They move back and forth. I think the fears are unfounded. If you're going get into this game, for lack of a better word, or this profession, again for lack of a better word, you have to represent all the people equally. I hear words about democracy this morning. We're not taking the vote away from somebody. Democracy is not going to change. I think it's the responsibility of the constituents to pick the right person to represent all the constituents in the area.

I appreciate your concern. I just have difficulty in this country, where we pit one group against another.

Mrs McLandress: I'm not trying to pit one group against another. I really think there'll be a lack of representation for what is happening in the one small corner of our county as opposed to what's happening in —

Mr Stewart: I think it would make it very difficult if we all of a sudden decided to have only rural MPPs in this area and only urban ones over there. I think you've got a real problem because then you've got two distinct groups and I don't think it'll ever help to run Ontario very well.

0950

Mr Smith: Thank you for your presentation. When I was reading the commission's report, it alludes to the London area. In doing so, the commission attached the largely rural areas within the southern part of the city of London to Elgin county. There were no objections from anyone living in the area. As well, they indicated that Elgin county should not be split. Briefly, I guess the intent and input that was provided previously has been maintained, as it applies to this area anyway. Do you have any specific comment on that in the context of the concerns you raised in your paper?

Mrs McLandress: Basically, it's not pitting one against the other. There's nothing wrong with London — I like London — but I didn't choose to live in London. I chose to live in a rural area. I do think there's a difference in the way the constituents will want their MPP to — the issues. If it's a choice between money that's going to be spent in London and money that's going to be spent in Rodney, I don't know. Will it become what the priority is? Will it be money? Will it be voters in this area versus voters in that area? That's a large area, and the concerns are not common a lot of times.

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks so much for your presentation this morning. In some of this discussion about the amount of representation within any one riding, it's interesting that some of the people who spoke before you this morning indicated that it isn't so much how much urban you have or how much rural you have but, as a total, what percentage it makes up of the new riding. For

example, if the largest portion of the riding is to a great extent rural, it certainly changes the nature of the behaviour of the member who comes from that area. It also puts a different weight on what issues and how much time you must spend and how much time your staff spends in that particular area.

I come from Windsor. A great part of my area is inner-city Windsor, and a great part is a more affluent area of Windsor, for example. It seems to be sort of split down the middle. That means that when I look at the kinds of issues that come to my office, it really is 50-50. I have a significant number of both.

If you have a huge part being urban and another portion being rural, but that rural portion isn't nearly the numbers that make up the urban portion, surely that office will be consumed with mostly urban issues, just by sheer volume. There is certainly an argument that can be made in terms of how that member is now going to react: trying to assist with all issues, but just by sheer volume, they will obviously play less a part in the rural area. That is just going to happen.

I can't imagine that this government is all of a sudden going to do what the federal ridings currently do, that is, waive all postage fees. Let's face it, federal members can speak to all their constituents easily because the mailings are free. In provincial ridings, though, we are very restricted in our budget in terms of mailings. While they may have the same riding, we have very different rules for what governs what we can do and how we can speak to our constituents.

There was an incident in my county that happened several years ago. It was over a high school closing in Harrow, a small urban town in the county. The people there were very happy to see that because they had good rural representation, they knew that the rural urban towns understood the significant role a high school plays in a community. It wasn't just a money matter, because if money were the only answer they'd have closed the school a long time ago. They said that the people needed to understand, because they come from that area, because they live there, because they listen to the people there, that a local high school, for example, is like a centrepiece of the small town; that if only money mattered, it would have been closed long ago.

I've often thought of that in this debate, about lessening the voice in rural Ontario. Things like rural high schools begin to take on — you get a dim view, "If only money matters, let's save money where we can," and the one that seems likely to go is the one that potentially isn't filled, say, an office that's not nearly as used as the urban office, yet the significance that that office or high school plays in the community goes far beyond just the money budgeted to run it. Do you have that similar experience?

Mrs McLandress: If you even look at something as simple as a constituency office, right now, if you live in Rodney it'll take you half an hour to ride in to talk to your MPP if you needed to speak to him in person. If the constituency office is in south London, the time will be about the same, but — if you don't live in a rural area, you don't understand the mindset. People, some elderly people especially, will not drive into London on their

own. They're not used to the traffic, they're not used to the streets in London. That's going to become a barrier to them being represented, I feel.

In all rural areas, isolation is one of the key dangers to quality of life. Even to go to the grocery store most people have to drive 15, 20 minutes. If they have to go twice as far to speak to their MPP or make a long-distance call to speak to their MPP, or their MPP comes out twice a year because they haven't got time to travel that far, that's a concern and an effect on their representation.

Mrs Boyd: Thank you very much for coming. I know Dutton and know why you want to be sure that the people in Dutton have a voice at Queen's Park. I understand your concerns. Do you think democracy itself is affected by the number of representatives who do give voice to the concerns of their constituents?

Mrs McLandress: Yes, I think democracy is really at issue here. Even this process, to me, is an example of democracy that's not working. I heard about these hearings on Wednesday. I called my MPP's office on Thursday to find out when they were. I find out the only one scheduled in southwestern Ontario is on Saturday. My MPP's office did not know about this. My warden's office did not know about this. My local paper, the St Thomas Times-Journal, did not know about this. There is a serious problem when supposedly public hearings are not made public, there's no public knowledge of them. To me, that is a first indication that there's a problem with democracy as far this goes.

Mrs Boyd: The member for Peterborough mentioned and the government keeps talking about this commission that went on and that nobody objected in Elgin county. Those hearings were about federal boundaries. No one at the time those hearings were held expected that those federal boundaries were going to become the boundaries for Ontario politicians. Using that consultation as a marker for saying that there were no objections so there shouldn't be a problem is frankly playing fast and loose with the whole notion of consultation and the whole notion of objections to a process like this.

This is the first time in Ontario that boundaries have been changed for provincial ridings without having a commission, without that commission going through this process so that people could talk about what representation is like in Ontario and what the needs of their communities are. None of us expected at the time of the federal hearings that any government would be foolish enough, even if they wanted to reduce the numbers of MPPs, to slavishly follow boundary rules that might not speak to the representation needed in Ontario.

Mrs McLandress: To that I can only say that the MPs and the MPPs deal with different kinds of issues. While they all affect us all in different ways, we are forgetting that on the very basic issues — we have to drive to London now to get our driver examinations. We have no agricultural office now in Elgin county. As each of these services is eroded, our voice is eroded with it. As you say, as far as federal goes, that's one thing; in terms of MPPs and our representation in Toronto, where decisions are made every day that affect the life of every person in our riding, that is a different matter. I really think that if

it were open to the public there would be more comments and more questions about why this is such a great idea.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your input here this morning, Mrs McLandress.

Mrs McLandress: Thank you very much for your time.

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Mrs Boyd: Mr Chairman, we obviously have space in this hearing schedule, which we were aware of as soon as we saw the agenda. I want to register formally again with you my disapproval of your beginning without having a member of each party here. There was no reason to do that, given that we did not have a full schedule and particularly because there was a gap immediately following the first speaker. This is not the first time that you as Chair have taken this action, and I want you to know that I don't think it's appropriate and it's not according to the democratic traditions of the Legislature.

The second thing I want to say is that it is quite clear from the schedule that this problem that the previous speaker mentioned, about no one knowing about these hearings, is a very real problem in this area. I think we will see as we go on with this process over the next few weeks that this will not serve the government well in terms of its objectives around this legislation.

The last thing I would like to say is that I would like the staff of the Legislative Assembly to check with local members when they are planning an event like this. One of the other issues we are going to face today is that people will not be able to get here. We would have known that the Santa Claus parade was on, that the roads are all closed off, that there's little ability for people to get here. In fact, outside of this hotel right now, the crowds are building up and creating a real problem for anyone even trying to walk here.

I would say very clearly that we would have told you, if it was necessary to have these hearings today, that you mustn't have them downtown because it will make it difficult for people to get here. I would urge you as Chair of the committee, and other Chairs, to have the Legislative Assembly staff know that when something is being planned in this way it's important to check with local members. I think we are going to find, first of all, that the noise is going to be a little difficult for us as the parade actually comes by, but it really restricts access and it will be interpreted as a deliberate act by some people. I don't believe it is, but it will be interpreted that way. Thank you.

The Chair: Just to comment on a couple of things, Mrs Boyd: As the Chair of the committee, my standards are that we start on time. If you don't like that, I apologize for that, but that has always been my standard, that I start on time. The second thing: The subcommittee decided the location of the meetings. Your caucus had a member on that subcommittee. I believe they had an opportunity to advise the local members.

Mrs Boyd: I have been on many subcommittees of committees and I have never had any say in the actual location of hearings. Having them in London, yes, a subcommittee would have — but not having them here on this particular day. I would just like to say that's not correct.

Second, you are saying that your standards are different from the traditions of legislative committees and you will follow your standards rather than the tradition of legislative committees. That, frankly, is an indication of some of the problems that go on. I was stopped by a constituent out here who wanted to know about these hearings; by courtesy, I answered and so was a little late. I really find it very difficult. If you had a full agenda and it was absolutely essential that you start right on the dot, that would be one thing. But it certainly isn't this morning, and I really want you to know that it is unbecoming to take that kind of rigid position under those circumstances.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): It's certainly been my experience in the six years I've been serving in the Legislature and as a backbencher with the government over five years, serving on a lot of committees, that committees, I think by standing order, do not start until there's at least one member present from each of the parties. I could be wrong in that, but that was always my interpretation. I know that's often why people make a concerted effort to be there on time. Sometimes it's just not possible, for some of the reasons that the member for London Centre has just mentioned. If it's not by standing order, out of a matter of courtesy I think a few minutes of leeway would be given, that we not become so authoritarian and strict that we can't respect, as the member has suggested, some of the tradition that has been built up over the years in this jurisdiction.

The Chair: I would just as soon this not turn into a public debate about how the Chair is conducting the meetings.

Mr Sergio: We've got to kill the time.

The Chair: We don't have to kill the time. I don't believe this is the forum to discuss how you feel about how the Chair is conducting the meetings. If you have a problem with how the Chair is conducting the meetings, you take it up with the Speaker of the House. That's how it is handled. It's not done in front of the public because that's not the proper way to do it. I would ask that it not turn into that kind of forum.

Did you have a comment, Mr Sergio, about something different?

Mr Sergio: I just want to make a comment with respect to how things went at the subcommittee, Mr Chair, because you did say that each party had a member at the committee. With all due respect, Mr Chairman, every time we seem to debate something, either at the committee or subcommittee, we are always turned down. Every idea, every suggestion we make, is always turned down. Today was not the choice of the committee to be here. I won't go into the details of why we are here today, out of my respect for the Chair. But today we were supposed to be in Ottawa. We were not supposed to be here. All right?

What we did say in subcommittee was not listened to. We were supposed to be meeting duties of constituency week. I don't know if it was your idea, Mr Chair, or one of your caucus party. We said constituency week is a no-no, but we are sitting through Friday and Saturday as well to accommodate you people.

We had a problem to convince you people with respect to timing and notifying the public. That idea was run down as well, with a maximum of 24 hours' notice. Given that, where are we going to advertise? How are we going to notify the people? "Oh, well, we're just going to post it on the wall." Now, isn't that nice? Unfortunately, Mr Chair, that's the way things are being done time and time again. I join Mrs Boyd in showing concern with respect to the way things are done.

The Chair: I'm going to stop this discussion. The one thing I will say is that the decision about when this committee would meet is a decision that's made by a group other than this committee. I take no responsibility for that. It's made by the House leaders. If you don't like the decision they made, then that's where you discuss that. You don't discuss it in front of this committee, because we didn't make those decisions. That's the end of that.

Mr Sergio: That's why we discussed it at the subcommittee. The House leaders' decision is not final. It's up to this committee, Mr Chair.

1010

BILL ARMSTRONG

The Chair: Our next presenter is Mr Bill Armstrong, city councillor, ward 4. Good morning, Mr Armstrong. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Bill Armstrong: Thank you. First of all, thank you for having me here this morning. Unfortunately, because of only finding out that these hearings were even taking place a few days ago and because of my schedule, it was almost impossible to prepare a proper presentation. I have to apologize; I don't have a presentation, as I normally like to have.

I come here today not representing the city of London, but I'm just a councillor in the city of London and these are my personal views on this proposed restructuring. I have taken the time, as much as possible, to listen to the debate on restructuring. I've read some material on restructuring. One concern I have is that this is something that should be done through a commission perhaps, that the government shouldn't be directly involved in this process. I really think this process is flawed, for that very reason.

Another concern I have to do with the restructuring — I have to speak on a local basis because that's what I've looked at, how this affects Londoners. For an example, I look at London Centre, which is the old riding, and in my mind it looked after the needs and dealt with the people in central and east London. If you know London, it's sort of a community. Now we're looking at a representative who will be dealing with the concerns of a wide area, from central London right up to north London. Looking at the map, knowing London well, other than the fact that people are Londoners, for the people in far north London and London central there really isn't a lot in common other than the fact that they're Londoners.

It's important that when you draw up boundaries you look at many issues, including natural boundaries. I think you need to look at municipal ward boundaries. That's very important simply because provincial elected officials

quite often spend some time as municipal elected officials. That's where they gain some experience and gain the trust of constituents and get to know their constituents. It's quite often evolutionary that they become provincial elected officials from municipal council. It's important that they build up that rapport and a relationship with their constituents.

For an example, if I look at the proposed London-Adelaide, as a municipal representative I believe one sixth of my constituents would be in the new London-Adelaide, whereas before in, for example, London Centre, it would be a 50-50 split; I would probably have represented 50% of the individuals. I think it's very important that you look at that particular issue, especially in Ontario, because we have in most municipalities, if not all, the ward system.

Getting back to the meetings and having such short notice to prepare for this particular meeting — in fact, it was only because of a phone call or I would never have even known this meeting was taking place. I think it's an important process you're going through and I'm glad to see that the government is going through this process. It's important that you give the people of Ontario an opportunity to express their views about how their government is going to be formed.

Am I under the understanding that there are only six meetings, roughly, that are going on in the province of Ontario? As a personal view, I don't think that's enough meetings to adequately give everybody in this large province an opportunity to access this process. I understand that in the past there have been as many as 12 meetings when government looked at this process. Why only six? It's a very large province. I would think that means that in the north there must only be one or two meetings. Again, that's a concern.

Some of the other concerns, just briefly on the north, based on what you're proposing I think you are shortchanging the north. You're asking a lot of those members who will end up representing some of those ridings up there, just for logistics, travelling time. Constituents probably would like to see their members come to their meetings. When you have to go the distances you're proposing, first of all, you're looking at additional cost, and you're unfortunately looking at a situation where, a lot of times, members won't be able to be present at constituency meetings and so on. That's something I have a concern about.

It's important that there should have been some independence when looking at this, perhaps a commission. Going from the number of seats you have now to what you're proposing, while I think government needs to be restructured and we need to downsize, the proposed downsizing you're looking at is a little radical. I know past MPPs worked very hard, put in very long hours, and to be putting on a larger workload than what's already involved, again, you'll be shortchanging the people of Ontario in the type of representation they'll be receiving.

I'll leave the rest of the time for any questions.

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks for coming this morning. I'm assuming you fought the traffic to get in the hotel.

Mr Armstrong: I walked a long way.

Mrs Pupatello: We appreciate it. It's nice and brisk outside this morning.

The last woman who spoke to committee seemed so genuinely representing the interests of rural areas in Ontario. I can say with some certainty that this government will shove this legislation down our throat. It's going to pass in the House and this will be the new riding distribution in the next election.

Given that the Conservative members will pass this after third reading and we will be left with this, do you have any idea, coming from a city council here, what the government should also be doing, if there is a way to combat some of the issues, like long-distance telephone calls? When we think of the majority of people who call your office, likely many times the same who call my office, the elderly, people who are in need, those who are on some form of assistance, what kinds of things like long-distance telephone calls can the government do to block that negative impact of this going through?

Mr Armstrong: I can't speak too much for the rural areas because I'm not a rural person; I'm an urban person, always have been. But again, looking at the north and my understanding of what the proposals are, it is going to be especially difficult in the north, because obviously constituency offices are going to be quite farther apart than they ever were before. Perhaps there will be additional costs incurred and maybe part of this restructuring might include additional constituency offices so that they're still easily accessible to people, so that they don't have to travel for four, six, eight hours by car to meet with their elected representatives. Obviously there's going to be a lot of additional costs to the constituents. Again, this is just pure speculation, but there might be long-distance rates involved. I don't know too much about the north and the telephone systems and that, so I really couldn't comment any further than I have.

1020

Mrs Pupatello: I guess the other comments that were made this morning related to the ability of the current sitting MPPs to access ministers for influence, and those who have expressed greatest concerns to me are those in the agriculture business and those from rural areas. The people who expressed concern did so, not on the basis necessarily of fewer numbers, but that this, coupled with cuts that they were told would never happen — Noble Villeneuve, the current minister himself, guaranteed that they wouldn't cut the service to rural areas in agriculture programs. Because that is happening in tandem with this, the outcome really means that those needs simply will not be met, that their voices won't be heard, that all of the issues they face simply won't be addressed. Urban folks, quite frankly, don't understand what a significant impact that is when we talk about things like food processing, maintenance of roads for tractor runs, bringing the food to the market — all of those things. They simply are going to have less of voice for things that do count to urban people; they just don't know it. Do you have any comments about that?

Mr Armstrong: Obviously having fewer elected officials in rural Ontario will mean less accessibility, and yes, the fact that there's less representation means that there's been a form of cut. Rural Ontario has always had unique needs. Again, these needs may not be met to the level they were before. This all gets back to whether or

not six meetings in the province of Ontario are going to give rural Ontario an opportunity to express their concerns about having less representation.

Mrs Boyd: Thank you for coming today. We all feel very badly that people haven't had the time to prepare in the way they would have wanted to.

You talked about the issue of community of interest. In London, where this is a redistribution that doesn't affect the numbers of members we have but does affect the community of interest you talked about quite substantially, rivers as boundaries in our town don't make a lot of sense because communities have tended not to follow along the rivers necessarily. That certainly is true in the eastern part of what is now London Centre and what will become London-Fanshawe.

The other point you raised was the issue of how to compensate for fewer representatives. You are making an assumption that is not true when you say there will have to be more constituency offices, because at the same time that the government is lowering the representation it has fairly dramatically cut already the budgets that are available to MPPs and proposes to continue further cuts to those. They've cut a lot of the access by telephone to Queen's Park in fairly substantial ways so that people have a hard time getting in touch with their MPP at Queen's Park.

Your vision of how to compensate for this doesn't fit the picture we have. We see not only that the representatives are being cut, but that the resources that the fewer representatives will have are also substantially cut. As a councillor who I know has very few resources in terms of the way you represent your constituents, what do you expect the result of that to be?

Mr Armstrong: Just going back quickly to the additional offices, that is only a concept on how to lessen the impact. It certainly won't make up for what's proposed. As you alluded to, that's not what has been suggested or planned. I'm only suggesting that it might make up for some of the impact, but not all of the impact. Hearing that budgets are cut, obviously that's not something that's probably going to be even considered. It was not something I believe was going to happen but something I was thinking might lessen the impact but not completely alleviate what's about to happen.

In London rivers sometimes are used as boundary lines, but it's not just natural boundary lines. There are communities within a community, and that's what we have in London. What I'm suggesting to you is that looking at the proposed redrawing of the boundaries here in London, in my mind, hasn't been taken into consideration. What we're doing here is, you will end up representing a certain number of people, and that's the long and the short of it. You won't be representing, in my mind, communities that a lot of people in London feel very strongly about: "I live in south London," or "I live in the east end." These are communities, and when you look at redrawing the maps you should be looking very strongly at the communities. A riding may be made up of five or six communities. Just to draw the lines along highways and rivers, strictly looking at, "I need to represent so many people to make up this riding," isn't the way I would go about restructuring government.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Thank you, Mr Armstrong. I appreciate you coming and making a presentation before us here today. Let me just say that while I disagree with your conclusions, I certainly agree with one of the premises early on in your presentation, that government shouldn't be involved in the boundary setting, and I'm pleased to say that we aren't.

On the day that the Common Sense Revolution was released there were no such things as draft proposals at that point from the federal boundary commission. Our promise was to save the taxpayers of Ontario the cost of a duplicate commission going around talking to presumably exactly the same people who presumably would have exactly the same concerns about geography, about population, about particular geographical factors such as rivers and islands and natural divisions within communities as well. Knowing that the process had served the country well over the years and knowing that federal law guarantees a certain distribution of seats within this province, that there must be a standard set and then variances allowed for rural and for urban, but that there must be a standard, there's never been that sort of standard for provincial law, there's always been the opportunity to gerrymander in the past to influence the commission.

The fact of the matter is that we said we would trust the non-elected officials who formed that commission here in Ontario, one of the 11 formed across Canada, and those people, at arm's length from government, are the ones who fashioned together the boundaries you see before you today. But it went further than that. Subsequent to the Common Sense Revolution being released, the federal boundary commission held public hearings on its draft proposals. Based on the input they received — 185 oral, as I recall, and 116 written submissions — 76 of the 103 ridings had minor adjustments made to further perfect those boundaries.

I should tell you that the hearings we're having here today are the first time, the best that I've been able to ascertain, that any government has gone out while Parliament is sitting and consulted people in 10 years. So when some around this table would tell you that this process is very undemocratic, it's exactly the opposite. Instead of sloughing off that the standing orders say we can't travel except when the House doesn't sit, we suggested a pretty innovative means of getting around it, and that's to do it on the Friday and Saturday because, technically speaking, the House doesn't sit any days other than Monday to Thursday.

So government is involved not only in the process but in the means of making sure people have input even to what this bill is, which is nothing more than our keeping a promise. We said we were quite pleased to go around the province. Yes, there's short notice here in London and Ottawa, but all three parties agreed to the advertising process, to the days of meeting, to the hours of sitting, and we're very pleased to come down to London to hear your views and the views of the other people before us here today.

I liked your comments on a couple of other things because one of the members opposite used the phrase that we're going to shove through this legislation.

Mrs Pupatello: I said "ram down our throat."

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you. I was trying to put an even more polite spin to it. This bill was introduced October 1. So here we are already, 40 days later. The federal government passed its bill in 26 days. We're still nowhere close to third reading and royal assent of this bill. We anticipate it's another five or six weeks away at least. We will have taken two and a half to three times as long as the federal government did.

In the context that the federal government did a good job, how would you respond to the fact that we're taking two and a half times as long to do it, that we have honoured a promise by doing this and that quite frankly we're going out on hearings that are extraordinary in the context, aside from the January-February —

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist, if you'd like an answer to this question, I would suggest you stop.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you. Can you really tell us that this an undemocratic and non-participatory thing we're going through here today?

Mr Armstrong: As I stated earlier, it seems to me that six meetings in the province of Ontario isn't going to allow all the citizens in the province to have adequate access to this process. I can't say it any more clearly than that. That should answer all those questions. It just isn't adequate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Armstrong. We appreciate your input here this morning.

1030

LONDON-MIDDLESEX TAXPAYERS' COALITION

The Chair: Our next presenters represent the London-Middlesex Taxpayers' Coalition: Jim Montag, the chair, and Craig Stevens, the vice-chair. Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome to our committee. Should you allow time for questions in your 20 minutes, they would begin with the New Democrats. The floor is yours.

Mr Craig Stevens: The London-Middlesex Taxpayers' Coalition was formed in 1990 to address some of the tax concerns related to escalating taxes throughout municipalities in the province. We have endured for that length of time and we welcome the opportunity to speak before the commission here and present the viewpoints of our members and our executive. We have mixed feelings and emotions about the proposal, but generally we are certainly in support of the initiative to downsize the number of MPPs in Ontario. I will be providing a portion of the presentation and Mr Montag will conclude.

Certainly you're to be applauded for going from 130 down to 103, simply to mirror the number of federal ridings. The reduction in the number of MPPs, more than anything else, serves symbolically to support the sweeping reductions in the number of civil servants and to uphold a key platform plank of the election presented to Ontarians. Its appeal is widespread and it's certainly easily understood. After all, who in their right mind would want to say, "Hey, let's have more politicians"? It's that simple.

The London-Middlesex Taxpayers' Coalition has analysed and reviewed the proposed Bill 81 and we've come to the conclusion that it really and truly is anything

but simple. During the course of our deliberations, we quickly discovered that our unbridled support of the bill had to be tempered somewhat when we more closely examined the words "less government" and "concentration of power."

We found it necessary to evaluate the proposed bill and to create two value categories. The value categories we chose to deal with are "symbolism" and "substance." By "symbolism" we intend to mean political opportunism whose vision does not extend beyond the range of the next election. Through use of the word "substance," we mean a fundamental, primary or general truth on which others depend and policy endures.

Symbolism is a powerful influence used to superficially convert unknowing persons to the knowing persons. It is something that today's voters can readily grasp. It has the ability to convert the complex to the simple.

When people think of big government, they think of the size of government in terms of the numbers of politicians, of bureaucrats, of programs and of taxes paid. Rarely do they think of controls on intrusions into their personal lives or property. Our definition of downsizing of government would be to have fewer laws, the repealing of laws, but unfortunately the average voter cannot grasp that concept.

For sure, the incumbent government has and is displaying honour and commitment in attempting to fulfil its campaign pledge. In doing so, it runs the risk of possible underrepresentation of many Ontarians and upsetting many of its own members and supporters with the decreases in the number of ridings.

Many Tory candidates were elected on the promise to reduce the size of government. Many Tory incumbents will be upset. Much money will be saved with the fewer number of boundaries to deal with. It's very difficult to argue with a proposal that results in fewer politicians. Perhaps we should examine whether fewer politicians is desirable.

At this point in time, I wish to turn the remainder of our presentation over to Mr Montag.

Mr Jim Montag: With regard to substance, do fewer politicians necessarily equate with less government? Why does government exist?

Let's look at the issue of fewer politicians. For sure, government would cost less. With each MPP employing a minimum of four persons, provincially we could save close to \$12 million with 27 fewer of them; that is, 27 fewer employees. Indeed the savings would be substantial, but at what cost? How can we objectively know what is the optimum level of representative efficiency? Should it be 103, 99 or 50 MPPs? Should the link with the number of MP ridings be based solely on convenience and financial considerations?

We at the London-Middlesex Taxpayers' Coalition believe it should not be based upon answers to any of the above questions. We believe greater accountability of government is realized through a set formula which establishes MPP representation based on the riding population without exception.

Will 103 seats be adequate? There is always a risk that fewer seats result in a more concentrated government, with power wielded by fewer persons.

We could very convincingly argue that the concentration of power would not be abused by this government, a government that respects and understands the profound meaning of individual rights. It is indeed gratifying that finally here in Ontario we have politicians in power who are keeping their election promises and truly representing the majority of the citizens. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen. We have five minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with Mrs Boyd.

Mr Martin: Actually, I'm going to start this time. I'll start by saying I appreciate some of the points you make, because you're absolutely right. This is not an exercise that anybody should take lightly and is certainly a lot more sophisticated than simply bottom-line consideration and being for political reasons because it looks good, reducing the number of MPPs from 130 to 103. There's a lot more at stake here.

I suggest that this weekend, as we look forward to Remembrance Day on Monday and we remember the fact that many of our forefathers lost their lives fighting for democracy over a period of time in very difficult circumstances, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense for us at this time, in such a hurried fashion, to make the very major and fundamental change that's been suggested by this piece of legislation simply because the federal government decided it was in its best interests to do it this way, as they worked through a process of having, for them, democracy evolve. For me, this exercise has to be about enhancing democracy, not taking away or diminishing.

You mentioned in your presentation the need to consider other issues besides the fact that it would cost less and the political ramifications of obviously having fewer MPPs. I suggest to you that, as a jurisdiction, the province of Ontario has over a number of years set in place a way of doing that which does take into consideration all of those issues. If this government chose to be respectful of that tradition and to follow the established pattern, instead of six meetings in a short period of time, we would have a commission out there meeting with you and with others, with the kind of time that was necessary to hear you through, to ask you questions, to probe a bit further, and for you to be able to go back and maybe get some more information and bring it forward so that at the end of day we would have something that would be well-thought-out and make sense as we try to enhance democracy.

I guess the question I would have of you is, how comfortable are you with the process, with the time lines? This government doesn't have to go back to the people for another two or three years. It could have waited for the intersession, which is the normal pattern for public hearings, to have more time to actually explore this and meet in areas where people are most seriously affected by this so that we can hear more from them and to go to a commission, then, that would take into consideration some of the things that our predecessors in government decided were important in this kind of exercise, which are the consideration of community or diversity of interests, means of communication, topographical features, population trends, the varying of rural electoral districts, existing boundaries of municipalities or wards

and special geographic considerations, including the sparsity, density or relative rate of growth in population in the various regions of the province. Accessibility, size and shape would be considered.

Nobody's arguing that this kind of exercise doesn't need to be done. We need to do it. We need to revisit from time to time the question of how we represent ourselves and how people's voices are heard. I guess what I'm asking you today, in light of what you presented here, is, how comfortable are you with the process and the time lines that we're dealing with?

1040

Mr Montag: With respect to one of your comments about the tradition that has been here and the method by which this has been arrived at in the past, we have very great respect for that, but we live in a society of change. Things are changing constantly. Things are going on constantly. The federal government, I'm sure, has looked into this very seriously and made very good, modern-type decisions to arrive at their new riding boundaries.

I don't think this government is rushing into this, as you suggest. This was very clearly one of their election promises and I find it very gratifying that they're keeping their election promises. They're starting here now, after a year in power and I don't think that's at all inappropriate to start at this time on a subject like this. I don't think they're rushing it and I feel quite comfortable in what they're doing and how they're doing it.

Mr Maves: Thank you for your presentation. Mr Martin seems to indicate that he would like another commission in Ontario, a duplicate one, as a matter of fact, to a federal one that just traversed the province. I imagine you're not surprised at that.

In the Constitution that runs Canada, the British North America Act, different powers are set out for the provincial and federal governments. Over the years, provincial government has devolved its jurisdictions down to municipal councils, school boards, regional councils and so on to help it administer what's under its jurisdiction from the BNA Act.

In my area, in the Niagara region, we have 388,000 people. We have six MPPs, 112 municipal councillors and mayors, 30 regional councillors and 68 school board trustees. That's a total of 216 elected people to administer provincial issues for 388,000 people. The members opposite think that's not enough. Do you think that's enough? Too many?

Mr Montag: No, I think that's quite an appropriate number. When you're dealing with different levels of government, you must also consider different quantities or numbers of elected people. In municipal government, you naturally have to have far more than you do in provincial or federal government, but I think we can be quite adequately represented here in the province with the same number of provincial MPPs as we have of federal MPs. I don't see any difficulty there at all.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation. I couldn't agree with you more that one of the things that is most galling to the other side is that we are keeping our promises. I have every reason to believe it was that hope that there would be integrity and a commitment to the Common Sense Revolution that yielded the election result last year.

There is no doubt — and you heard me mention the previous presenter — the standard that was set by the boundary commission is a very simple formula: You take the total population divided by the number of seats, and that becomes the benchmark. Around that benchmark, though, they were allowed to vary the number of voters, the number of citizens in each riding. We've heard in the two and a bit days' worth of hearings so far about great concern in the north and in rural ridings that there be a recognition of the geographical realities that balance off against population.

My first question for you is a very simple one. Would you agree that a variance of 20% — in other words, making the riding 20% smaller, with a 20% smaller workload, at least in terms of voters for the MPPs in the north — would that adequately address, in your mind, the geography?

Mr Stevens: I'd like to respond to that, if I could. We deliberately stated no exceptions, and there would be no exceptions for northern Ontario. In this day and age, we're not having our representatives travel by Model T Fords and horse and buggies. We're totally overlooking in this debate the impact of technology today, the advancements in computerization, in teleconferencing and that type of thing. It would be nothing for vast geographical districts to have satellite offices whereby the constituents could access technology available to access their MPP.

We do not support any variation whatsoever at all based on geography or any other considerations. Where does it end? One could argue that we should have special boundaries for perhaps the Asian community in Toronto or any other ethnic group based on their considerations, so no, no exceptions.

Mr Gilchrist: To some extent, anyone who believes in the principle of representation by population could not find fault with your argument. I would draw your attention to the fact that still today 10.7% of the seats in the House will be occupied in the north even though it only has 7.8% of the population. So a significant extra advantage has been given. A similar reflection is made in rural ridings. Most of them are between 2% and 7% below the average set.

The only other point I'd like to get your comments to is the issue of workload. Many American states with our population, because there are no other Canadian provinces to draw a parallel — I'll give you a couple of examples: Florida, 116,000 population; Illinois, over 100,000; California, 400,000 per representative — not senator; per state representative; and even Texas, 122,000, and it's a part-time job. Do you think if 97,000 is the average, we won't be able to attract people capable of being MPPs and serving their constituents?

Mr Stevens: I don't think the numbers, high or low, are going to have any impact on whether or not we're going to attract capable and competent people to politics. I really don't see the numbers driving that.

Mr Gilchrist: You're confident we'll still find good MPPs.

Mr Stevens: Yes.

Mrs Papatello: Thank you so much for coming this morning and fighting the crowds. I hope you didn't battle

with Santa Claus to come in this morning. I have a couple of questions for you. With the comments you made that you believe the federal offices should be similar to provincial offices — either one of you could answer — then do you believe that all the offices should have the same resources in which to run? For example, should the provincial offices have the same resources and benefits that would allow them to reach all their constituents as do the federal offices?

Mr Stevens: We don't know what staffing levels and resources might be available to the federal —

Mrs Papatello: Yes, the federal offices have significantly more money to run. They have things like free postage to all constituents. They have a greater budget, allowing for greater staffing. Often you'll find federal members having those satellite offices that you spoke of in the north.

Mr Stevens: Definitely there could be a compelling argument to have an additional executive assistant or somebody in that capacity. Resources allotted would have to be fine-tuned a wee bit, I would think, to accommodate —

Mrs Papatello: Yes. I just wanted to make sure you were both aware of the significant difference between the provincial and federal resources.

Mr Stevens: It's possible they're too high as well.

Mrs Papatello: Yes. That's the thing. Does it come down or does the provincial office go up? Regardless, I think the point I'm making is that if you're going to have the same boundaries and you believe, given your comments, that the work the federal and provincial do is the same — I don't agree with that, given that the issues are significantly different at a municipal, provincial and federal level. It means that, depending on the issue, it significantly changes the amount of interaction between the office and its constituent. That is borne out by fact. We have done that kind of research in my area. Do you feel that constituents should make long-distance charges by telephone to call their MPP? Do you feel that is an appropriate cost to be borne by the taxpayer?

Mr Stevens: I've noticed, interestingly, the absence of 1-800 numbers in the Toronto area. I'm not a wealthy person. I struggle, like many other middle-class people, with a family and three children to raise, but damn it all anyway. If something is important to me, I will make that long-distance call and I'll make it at my expense.

Mrs Papatello: So you think that every constituent — if they should have to call their MPP and it is a long-distance charge, that's okay?

Mr Stevens: If there are genuine financial stress loads placed upon persons, reversed charges or something to that effect could be put in place. You're suggesting if they can't afford to make the long-distance call? Is that what you're suggesting, the \$1 or \$2 or whatever it might be?

1050

Mrs Papatello: Correct. What do you think is an appropriate distance to travel to reach the MPP? Do you think a three-hour car drive is too long or too short to reach their MPP?

Mr Stevens: I alluded to something previously, that perhaps in this day and age a physical setting in your

MPP's office on a Friday afternoon could very well be a thing of the past when we look at the impact that technology could make through teleconferencing and that type of thing.

Mrs Pupatello: I noticed that and I found it interesting that, say, farmers in the north then would have to have the receiving end of the teleconference centre to access their MPP. That probably isn't likely.

Mr Stevens: No, it's not, but you could have a person having quite a diminished —

Mrs Pupatello: You remember the debate about the cell phones in the north. What was so striking about it was that northern communities really hadn't reached the level technologically to even afford a cell phone in that area. That's why it was a bit strange, because I think that may come in a couple of decades, but I don't think it's there now.

Mr Stevens: We suggested a satellite office, perhaps, where you might have a computer hookup through the Internet where that farmer or whoever it might be now would have to travel only 50 or 60 miles to sit down and have those same audio-visual links with his MPP.

Mrs Pupatello: Can I also ask you if you think there should be the same across-the-board cuts in the various branches of government as we're seeing in the governmental representation side? For example, would you be surprised to hear that the Premier's office has increased their budget by almost \$1 million for this coming year?

Mr Stevens: I'm sure there's no shortage of surprises to be found anywhere in government.

Mrs Pupatello: But in this particular case, how do you feel about that?

Mr Stevens: Simply to spring something on somebody that this or that has happened I think kind of lends itself towards subjective argument.

Mrs Pupatello: If I showed you a copy of the estimates for the Premier's office —

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs Pupatello. Thank you very much, gentlemen. We do appreciate your input this morning.

Mr Stevens: I'd like to say that we also appreciate you folks sitting on a Saturday.

KIMBLE SUTHERLAND

The Chair: The next presenter is Kimble Sutherland. Good morning, sir. Welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Mr Kimble Sutherland: Good morning. Thank you, Chair. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present to you some thoughts on Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act.

This piece of legislation is based on a popular view that we have too many politicians who do not solve any problems but only create and add to them. Let me state unequivocally that I reject that view and as a former politician find it insulting and objectionable. Representative democracy cannot operate without politicians. Politicians come from the people to represent the people and make decisions on their behalf. The ongoing denigration of politicians in a representative democracy is a denigration of democracy itself.

That does not mean elected officials should not be held accountable for their decisions. However, it does mean the demonizing and cheap shots taken at politicians as a whole, simply because they are elected officials making what they think are appropriate decisions, create more cynicism and contempt for the entire process. Disagree with the policies and the decisions, but do not demonstrate contempt for your profession.

Are there too many MPPs in Ontario today? As I was preparing for this presentation by doing research and reviewing the second reading debate, I was quite surprised to find that no statistical analysis was presented by the government or opposition members to support or reject the view that we have too many provincial representatives in Ontario today. Public policymaking must have some rational basis to back up the initiatives. In this case there are a couple of types of statistics that could indicate whether we have too many MPPs or have increased the number significantly over the years.

How does Ontario compare with the other provinces in terms of the number of people each MPP is currently representing? At the back of the presentation you will find exhibit 1, which is a chart comparing Ontario with the other nine provinces. You may already have received information like this in the last couple of days. The figures in this chart are not exact but are close approximations based on 1991 census data information. You may wish, if you haven't already received it, to have legislative research provide you with more up-to-date and exact figures.

From this chart you will see the range in the other provinces, from a low of 4,000 in Prince Edward Island to a high of 55,000 in Quebec. You will note that Ontario's current average representation is about 77,000. The reality is that Ontario has the highest average number of people represented by an MPP of any province in Canada by over 35%. If we used the government's criteria for how it determined the welfare rate in Ontario, which was at 10% above the national average, Ontario should have 235 seats. If Ontario decided to go 10% above the closest province, which is Quebec, we should have 163 members. The fact is that compared to the other nine provinces and even compared to the next-highest province, Ontario would appear to be underrepresented, not overrepresented.

The chart also includes comparisons with some of our neighbouring states, such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York. You will note that both Michigan's and Pennsylvania's average figures are lower than Ontario's. Only the highly populated state of New York is higher than Ontario, with each representative responsible, on average, for 83,000 citizens. Since the government also looks upon the state of New Jersey with great favour, it is interesting to note their average is one member for 64,000 people.

Has the number of MPPs grown too rapidly over the last while in comparison to general population increases? Since 1971 Ontario's population has increased by over 40%, but the number of MPPs has only increased by 11%. The reality is that the number of MPPs compared to the population has declined significantly over the last 25 years and the number of people MPPs represent on average has increased dramatically.

It is the responsibility of the proponents of this bill to provide the people of Ontario some detailed information to support the bill's premise. I would also encourage members of this committee to put the statistical information in this presentation to other presenters in support of the bill. Ask them whether they are aware of this information, and once they are, ask them whether they still think we have too many MPPs. This information also might have changed a lot of opinions if presented in the meetings that led up to this proposal being included in the Common Sense Revolution.

During the second reading debate there was discussion about the roles of the MP and MPP in Ontario. Supporters of the bill suggested the two jobs are very similar and that it is therefore not a problem to have the same ridings. I agree that there is some similarity in case work, whether it is employment insurance and social assistance or pensions and WCB. However, there are also substantial differences in the two roles, particularly when it comes to representing organizations in your riding. The province provides the vast majority of direct-transfer dollars to service providers such as hospitals, home care, school boards, municipalities, colleges, universities and child care. Federal MPs do not have to keep track of all these agencies. Provincial MPPs have to be aware of how both funding and legislative decisions will impact these service providers. Expanding the size of the ridings adds a lot more of these agencies for MPPs to monitor.

As the former member for Oxford, it was easier for me because all the riding was within the county boundaries, as the current member can verify. There were only three hospitals, one county government, one public board, one separate board, one Federation of Agriculture. I was also aware that many fellow members representing rural ridings were not as fortunate because they crossed over several counties or regions, resulting in their having more transfer agencies to monitor. Changing provincial ridings to federal boundaries will only exacerbate this problem. As the member for Elgin noted in the second reading debate, more responsibilities and programs are likely to be transferred to the provinces in the future. The increased number of transfer agencies that MPPs will have to be in touch with now, as compared to an MP, is a strong argument for having smaller provincial ridings.

Like many other people, I also want to refer to the Camp commission, which dealt with the issue of how to determine appropriate levels of representation. The Camp commission referred to the first 1962 Ontario redistribution commission, which identified three types of ridings in Ontario. Those three types of ridings were rural, urban-rural and urban.

The 1962 commission put forward ranges for the three types of ridings. That first commission clearly recognized, and accounted for, representation by population and geography. The Camp commission reconfirmed that basis for determining ridings. To quote the commission:

"Our scan through the past record of debate over the size of membership of the Legislature underlines that there has always been a dominant concern over local and regional representation. That is, the population growth in the province as a whole, and the demographic transfers to the cities, required the redistribution to retain a semblance

of the principle of representation by population. But this was always tempered by a broad determination to retain representation for those areas which the application of strict mathematics would have deprived."

It is a well-established principle that geography, demographics and regionalism must be taken into account, along with representation by population, in determining boundary ridings. This process may not be neat, efficient, timely or the cheapest way to establish the boundaries, but democracy, particularly for a large geographic area, is not neat, efficient, timely or cheap. There is a price for having democracy. While technology can assist the process, it cannot replace it through a 1-800 number, as one of the supporters of the bill suggested during the second reading debate. The government has cut out some toll-free numbers and is now charging to use others, as a student here at Western recently found out when they tried to get information on their student loan. Is this how we define more accessible, accountable and open government?

1100

The main points I wanted to make were that we do not have too many MPPs when compared to other provinces and many states, that the number of MPPs has grown at a much smaller rate than the overall population, and that an MPP's job is different from an MP's, particularly when transfer payment agencies are brought into the picture. There are several factors, such as geography, that must be considered when determining riding boundaries.

Bill 81 fails to recognize these points and suggests dollar savings should be the only basis for determining boundary ridings. The government does not have a case to support its actions in Bill 81. They have failed to provide any real evidence that Ontario has too many MPPs. I encourage this committee to vote against Bill 81 and to recommend a more appropriate process for redistribution of provincial ridings.

Finally, there was much discussion in second reading about electoral reform. While I believe there is no evidence to support reducing the number of MPPs, there is strong evidence to support electoral reform. It is well past the time that Ontario implement a form of proportional representation.

Exhibit 2 at the back of this presentation shows the percentage of popular vote and percentage of seats received by the governing party during the last five majority governments in Ontario. Our first-past-the-post system distorts the voting intentions of the public. In a province as large and diverse as Ontario, we will always need the majority of our representatives to be elected on a constituency basis. However, if all of us are truly interested in modernizing our democracy, then rather than eliminating the 27 seats, allocate them based on the percentage of popular vote received by each party. Such a move would be demonstrating real courage and would make our legislative process more responsive to the wishes of Ontarians.

The Chair: We've got three minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the government.

Mr. Gilchrist: Very quickly, to address some of your points, the denigration of politicians — the furthest thing from it. Some of the members opposite and you yourself

today read into this that it somehow is demeaning to politicians to suggest that we can work harder, we can work smarter, we can deliver more for the money we are paid. I see this as a sign of respect for politicians, a sign that there are people who are willing to serve this province who are prepared to make that investment, not for dollars but because they believe in the things they stand for. This is every inch that.

The up-to-date data — you mentioned you had done some analysis yourself. MPP pay analysis was something we did before passing the bill to reduce all of our pay. It said we were underpaid relative to some of the other provinces. Should we have used the standard you're putting forward here today and, because other provinces paid more, raised the pay of MPPs?

Mr Sutherland: Let me say that the premise of this bill is implying that past MPPs haven't been increasing their workload. The statistical information which shows the population has increased 40% since 1971 and the number of MPPs has only increased 11% implies that with the current process, we've been increasing the workload of MPPs. Each time we've added more members, that has not been keeping up with the population, which means they have had to represent more people.

Mr Gilchrist: We accept that. What we're saying in this bill, though, is we believe we can work another 20% harder.

Let me just ask you one other question, because we're very limited in time here. I didn't hear you say that we should use the same standard to increase MPP pay. In the US numbers, you factored in the reality that they have a Senate. So to arrive at numbers that get lower than Ontario's, you have to use two Houses. Are you calling for an Ontario Senate?

Mr Sutherland: No, I'm not. The point here is, it's the number of people each elected official has to represent, on average, and we're taking average figures.

Mr Gilchrist: You don't believe you represented —

Mr Sutherland: No, excuse me, Mr Gilchrist. Are you going to exclude the upper elected members? They're elected in both Houses in the US, so I don't think you can exclude those numbers.

Mr Gilchrist: Each group represents their whole constituency.

Mrs Boyd: He wants to make a speech, not listen to the presenter.

Mr Sergio: He cannot interfere. Please let him answer the question, Chair.

The Chair: Mr Sergio.

Mr Sutherland: Let me say here —

Mr Gilchrist: We only have three minutes. I'm trying to get a straight answer, that's all.

Mr Sutherland: Go ahead.

Mr Gilchrist: So you don't believe we need a Senate.

Mr Sutherland: The issue before us is not MPPs' pay; it's about electoral boundaries.

Mr Gilchrist: It's about setting a new benchmark. It's about setting a higher standard. It's about working harder and smarter. That's what this is about.

Mr Sutherland: Mr Gilchrist, all I'm saying is we have the highest standard already in the country —

Mr Gilchrist: And we think we can make it better.

Mr Sutherland: — and I'm saying the basis of comparison should be with other provinces, not with the federal government, because the job of an MPP in each province is different from that of an MP. That is why you should compare with other provinces, not with what the federal government has used as a standard.

Mr Gilchrist: I agree. Unfortunately, to go to a PEI model of only representing 5,000 people I'm afraid is not an option.

Mr Sutherland: I didn't say that.

Mrs Papatello: I'd just like to calm things down a little bit. I wanted to continue with some information that I'd like to put forward for your commentary. This is being passed off and is being named as the Fewer Politicians Act and it has been seen as a bonanza in terms of public support. It is implied that fewer politicians is a good thing. Quite frankly, I'm with you; I do find the title offensive. If it was about a higher standard, they should have called it that, if that is the case.

The numbers I'd like to give you are numbers that were required to be submitted to the committee on estimates by the government, and the Premier's office was required to submit the following information. The 1996-97 estimates for the Office of the Premier are \$2.7 million — actually, it's more than that — and the estimates for 1995-96 were \$1.8 million, a significant increase in the Office of the Premier. That is fact; that was required of the Premier to put forward at the committee on estimates. This is not something we just dreamed up; this was actually authentic documentation.

My concern is that while the government is busy cutting the representation that the electorate has, it continues to grow. The last group that came before us talked about the concentration of power. It's very clear that we have proof that this is happening, that while the elected voice is smaller, the powerful, unelected voice grows stronger. You can call it undemocratic; you can call it whatever you want. What it is is unfair in that if you're going to make the cuts, ensure they're across the board. It is as inappropriate as Bart Maves suggesting that we think we need more politicians. I don't think that. My caucus doesn't think that. The Liberals have never advocated for more. What we have said is "fair." If you're going to cut one, you must also cut the executive branch so that the balance remains the same. This is the most significant problem with the bill. I'd like your comment.

Mr Sutherland: Rather than commenting on the specifics, when on the surface it does seem inappropriate to be increasing by that amount, I think the overall concern is that if you reduce by 27, does that mean you're going to increase executive governing, and what does that do for the accountability process? What does that do for the number of committees to hold public hearings when you only have 103 members versus 130? Will you have all the same committees? Will you have fewer committees? Will you have fewer members on the committees?

I think the public should be concerned with reducing the number of elected, accountable officials to each part of the province. Will that allow for an increase in executive government, and is that a good thing? Democracies

rely on a balance between executive, legislative, and of course the judicial. That's the checks and balances in appropriate democracy, and you don't want to get them out of whack.

Mrs Boyd: Thank you very much for your presentation. The figures that you give, of course, haven't received any publicity from the government, so I'm glad you brought them forward.

One of the myths this government is putting forward is that this is strictly representation by population. Of course, anybody who knows what the Constitution says about representation federally and provincially knows that's not the case. The formula for representation by population already has to take out the constitutional requirement for PEI to have four members, for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to have a certain number of members, for the 75 members, I think it is, in Quebec. Then, with the seats that are left over, you get representation by population. So in reality, on the federal basis, Ontario is also shortchanged if we really want to talk about rep by pop. Yet when we hear our friends over here talk, it's as though, "Oh, this is a magic formula." That's one of the reasons it makes no sense to do provincial boundaries the same as federal boundaries, because it isn't in fact representation by population in that way.

1110

Mr Sutherland: My view is that comparing it to the federal system is wrong in the first place. They're different jobs, they're different responsibilities, and the comparison should be with the other provinces and, if so be it, other states. I know Mr Gilchrist had talked in the previous presentation about some states — Florida, Texas and California — indicating that they're higher. But the key point in that is population density. You could put the geographic areas of Florida, Texas and California and still not cover all of Ontario. You have to take that into account. It has to be considered. You can't ignore the reality that we're a large geographic mass with a small population in terms of density. Compare it to the other provinces in determining what the appropriate level is, not to the federal government. By all statistics, we're way ahead of every other province and therefore I don't see a basis for the proposal in the legislation.

Mrs Boyd: I certainly couldn't agree with you more, because I think when you really look at what we mean by representation, that's where we get at the issue of democracy. If we really believe that our job as representatives is to keep in close touch with our communities in the way you describe, it's very difficult to do that and, as you say, to hold various agencies accountable. It becomes harder and harder the larger the numbers might be, and it becomes particularly hard if you have a riding like the new Rainy River-Kenora riding, which is larger than all of Europe.

Mr Sutherland: On a geographic basis, I'm not as knowledgeable about northern Ontario, but here in southern Ontario, when I've seen the federal boundaries, they're cutting them across three or four counties now, which means you're going to be held responsible for the boards of education, the county governments, hospitals etc. You're adding a lot more transfer agencies that you're going to have to keep on top of. So the workload

is different from that of a federal MP, and that is why the comparison, in my view, should be with other provinces, not with what the federal government has proposed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Sutherland. We do appreciate your input here this morning.

Mr Stewart: On a point of privilege, Mr Chairman: I think all of us around this table should relook at what these hearings are. These hearings are public hearings. I would suggest that what it says is that we are to listen to the public. I would suggest — I'm talking to all members of this committee — that we relook at our mandate and we conduct ourselves a little better than we do in the Legislature and let these people have the opportunity to put forth their thoughts and ideas.

Mrs Boyd: Tell Mr Gilchrist that.

Mr Stewart: I'm telling all members that.

SUSAN SMITH

The Chair: Our next presenter is Susan Smith. Good morning and welcome to our committee. The floor is yours.

Ms Susan Smith: All the world may be a stage and most of us are desperately underrehearsed, including myself, so I thank you for your indulgence this morning.

If no one has done it already, because we're within about two months of January 8, 1997, I suppose I could welcome you to London-Adelaide. With a federal Liberal election call in the next few weeks or not, this riding, this area physically, as per the structure of the federal electoral boundaries commission, will be London-Adelaide for the purposes of a federal election called any second after January 8, 1997.

It's very brief notice, oral submissions. You don't appear to be holding any hearings in any rural areas. Toronto one day, Ottawa the next and London the last is not, in all seriousness, really looking for public input perhaps from the people with the most vested interest. So I'll start by saying that up front.

This again is part of a set piece. This is Bill 81, if we're going to start with the chronological numbering of the bills that have been brought forward as introduced by this government. They are definitely part of a set piece.

I'd actually call a majority government's first nine months similar to probably a full-term pregnancy. What you're really serious about doing and what's really important is done in the first nine months, and then the birthing begins. So the way I've looked at this government's introduction of bills and set pieces began with decisions by the cabinet on June 26, 1995, and proceeded from there.

Bill 7 was a very early bill: employment equity gone, proxy pay equity gone, the clear attack on women, desegregating full- and part-time workers of the same collective bargaining unit. We've just passed the first anniversary of that bill. Frankly, for the government members of this committee, I hope it comes home to roost. I don't care if you call an election after your miserable first 18 months, or 18 months after that when you think you've gotten all warm and fuzzy and heard a lot more from the public. People don't have a reason to forget what you've accomplished in your first nine months and your very clear political agenda behind that.

What's actually fun for some of us to do is give it a comparative analysis with the federal Liberal government's actions. In the federal Liberal government's actions, you've worked hand in glove. It's been a set piece.

With respect to electoral representation, Jean-Pierre Kingsley has brought forward legislation. In fact, right after Brian Mulroney won his second term, by December 1988, cabinet had commissioned a Gallup poll to look at the issue of voter registration and permanent voters' lists. The submission of Warren Bailie, the successor to Roderick Lewis — we certainly all remember exactly who he was — to this same committee on general government raised some very sticky points and he was very clear that he could not guarantee the integrity of the franchise of one person, one vote.

For you to be going to the Fewer Politicians Act — and I would additionally comment on the naming of your bills, that what the government chooses to name the bills is inveigling; obfuscation in some cases. No one is going to dispute that 130 to 103 is a diminution of a number, but this is Bill 81. Again, in terms of set pieces, the actual cost — and we'll look at the calendar year 1994, we'll look at the calendar year 1995, we'll look at the calendar year 1996, as well as the fiscal years, and we'll be looking at the calendar year 1997. Even if the government chooses to call an election halfway through 1997, it will still be able to prove that the cost of having elected people at Queen's Park is today higher than it has ever been before. The government's choice to present Bill 48, raising the pay of backbenchers — and you have a whole bunch in the government. I appreciate where the political pressure is coming from in the Tory caucus. If you carry through, if the government pushes through its agenda for Bill 81, it will be very clear to a taxpayer in Ontario to see that you're spending more money even if you have fewer politicians. I don't think there's a really good reason for people to blink or wink at that and give up on it. I repeat, it doesn't make any difference what you name the bill, the agenda of the government is very clear.

Rob Sampson actually ended up with an "honourable" in front of his name as the minister for privatization because of his ushering through that bill with its attendant amendments back in April. For Ernie Eves, Minister of Finance, Mr Control Costs, we're not impressed, the electorate's not impressed. It takes a bit of research to ferret this out, but the electorate won't be impressed. It doesn't matter how soon the government goes to the voters for this.

Bill 26, local government restructuring: This is more to do not so much with restructuring within the province; again, I repeat, this is working hand in glove with the federal Liberals carrying through with Brian Mulroney's clear agenda. I would call the boundaries, to an extent, a red-herring issue. I mean, that process took place in 1994. The public was invited to speak to it publicly at the end of 1993, all through 1994. People know what the boundaries look like federally. People are federal voters.

1120

To obscure the issue of a permanent voters' list, to obscure where you're working hand in glove with the federal Liberal Party, harmonizing the goods and services

tax, do you think the average voter will actually feel that fits under the rubric of: "We're the tax controllers. We're the people who can manage the economy"? I don't see that coming from this Conservative government.

For Warren Bailie to not be able to guarantee the integrity of the franchise for one person, one vote, when you go to rolling voters' lists, continuing rolls, is not very honest. If you attempt to put a referendum set or even one referendum question about taxation on municipal ballots, the way I'm looking at this government currently, it wouldn't surprise me at all for it to attempt to do that.

The actual diminution is not necessarily in politicians but clearly of the democratic process, the actual whittling away; it's niggling, it's bit by bit. We know that 19% of the people who attended the Republican convention in the States were millionaires. When people look at who involves themselves in the partisanship of the politics of a party in government, I don't think it will be lost on people where this government has been coming from: the Mulroney agenda.

Working all that closely with the federal Liberal government at a time when the issues around the legislation federally about family support — this government is choosing to have some level of incompetence that wasn't there previously in the provincial government bureaucracy so that support payments aren't made. Albeit, some are to non-voters; these are support payments to children. They aren't currently voters. They likely will not vote in the election that the Conservative government will call to attempt re-election. But those are the citizens of this province you are affecting with that kind of decision and decisions about rent control, for heaven's sake, and lack of support of third-sector housing. All for an agenda of a promised tax cut to a very specific sector of the population.

Al Leach is personally beginning to get a little bit of experience — at least his body language seems to show it in TV clips — of how he's going to appreciate the viscera of citizens in Ontario. It's going to dictate how they interact with him, how they react to him, how people feel about the subtext of this government's agenda. There is no reason for it to be lost on people, whether it's the money that goes to the Ontario Jockey Club while somehow we still keep the minimum wage frozen or the hand in glove with the federal government. In the next election federally there will be 98 Liberals in the province who will go for re-election claiming that they've raised the federal minimum wage in Ontario by 59%, which is because they matched your frozen rate of \$6.85 an hour. The previous federal minimum wage applicable in Ontario was \$4 an hour.

That is not going to cut it with the Canadian and Ontario public, to appreciate the pay raise the government introduced for members and clearly had the number of backbenchers to ram through, with no members of the opposition, incumbent Liberals, incumbent New Democrats. For you to be paying them more than they made under David Peterson and under Bob Rae when the pay was frozen — and to reflect the economy Gordon Thiessen is still saying that economic growth in the country is going to be very slow. The average Ontarian feels in their bones that this is a given.

I guess it's cynicism too. Calling it the Fewer Politicians Act is reflecting the ultimate attempt at spin but the ultimate cynicism informing that political intent at spin.

Not enforcing public administration of health care sits squarely with this provincial government, again how it works hand in glove with the federal government; and the issue of tobacco products being available and accessible to young people; and government's equivocation on whether there's a bit of acceptability to certain corporate interests at the margins having a vested influence on electoral processes.

I don't think it's lost on most thinking Ontarians and I don't think it's time for citizens to sit silent, because we don't see the policies working for individuals, working for the backbone of our communities, the average person who just does their job, whether they're a shift-working health care worker or the people who do unremunerated work in our communities.

I'm looking forward to the government standing up and talking about fair taxation, its ability to actually fairly tax — leadership, not helping out its friends, some of the corporate interests. We all know business comes to government like this. We know that. Everybody knows that. You could think about a bit of leadership.

This piece of legislation gets you obviously well past the first nine months, but the federal Liberal government, of course, helped out CN, helped out Stentor, helped out Bell Canada, did deals for its friends. Like I said, you could go full-term for the five years or you could call an election quite soon, and I don't think it would be lost on the average Ontarian where you've made a very clear decision to take this province. If you want a very low common denominator in terms of cynicism about the Fewer Politicians Act, you ought to count on it being the researchers who want to point to personal vested interests coming ahead of everything else informing this government's actions.

You don't have to go full-term. The documentation is there. We see it. Doing as you say, not as you do, is not a lesson that adult voting Ontarians need to hear from this Conservative government.

Welcome to London-Adelaide. I'd be happy to answer some questions.

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks so much for coming this morning. You managed to slam most political parties except the NDP.

Ms Smith: Correct.

Mrs Pupatello: I assume there's a reason for that. I would say too that probably the most offensive thing you could have said to the Tories is to tell them that they're working hand in hand with the federal Liberals.

Ms Smith: Which they are.

Mrs Pupatello: I imagine that you meant to do that as well. I would remind you also that having come through that party in power, through an NDP term, all of us, even if the NDP were elected back, would have had to make radical shifts in expenditures just because of the fact that we had an NDP government.

I'd also like to ask you specifically about this bill. As you say, it's going to come home to roost. You probably realize it hasn't yet. The Conservative government is currently riding high in the polls, higher than the day it

was elected, so it hasn't yet affected that average person on the street, whether they work in factories or wherever, that typical average person. They don't see it yet. I think it's going to take some time before they do see the full impact of this government's policies. I, like you, hope they see it before the next election rolls around, whether that's a full five-year mandate or four.

1130

In terms of the balance of power, I have a great concern about what this bill is going to do in that it allows the elected portion of the House to have that much less a voice while the executive branch of government continues to grow. There are already numerous examples in this government where the spin doctors, the staffers, have a significant amount of power far greater than elected representatives.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Pupatello. Mr Martin.

Ms Smith: Oh, do I not get to respond?

The Chair: Unfortunately, the question was way too long. She didn't give you any time to respond.

Mr Martin: Thanks for being here today and taking time to participate in the limited opportunity there is to discuss this very important piece of work that's being done. This is a fundamental shift, change, of great import to the way we do democracy in Ontario. The process this government has chosen to follow is one of convenience; you know, "We're going to take the federal boundaries and apply them." It does not respect the way we've always done redistribution: the commission established and the time allotted for full public cancellation. What's your feeling about that?

Ms Smith: I'm equally concerned with both the process and the results. The process actually is more problematic, again hand in glove with the federal Liberals, because it's all part of a set piece. It's not only the geographic boundaries; it's the function of not having a foot canvass enumeration. The last time I checked, since the country was having elections, we're a more urbanized population, not a less urbanized population, so the changes that the Conservative government would make to go with the federal Liberal government changes of a permanent voters list are not respectful of people in rural areas, not respectful of people in urban areas. They are certainly looking for less representation. It's really problematic when people in Ontario feel in our bones what the challenges in the economy continue and remain to be.

To its credit, the NDP government implemented a system in all the line ministries of examining programs. There was a real financial responsibility that they undertook in terms of planning. There was never any malevolent intent to do things like whittle down the deficit by using numbers out of the Attorney General's office from the family support plan payments. There was never anything that was so malevolent in their intent. There was a very straightforward dialogue with all partners, those in the municipality —

The Chair: Thank you very much. Mr Smith.

Mr Smith: Thank you, Susan, for your presentation.

Ms Smith: Hi, Bruce.

Mr Smith: How are you doing? From my perspective — I know you're involved locally and have made

several presentations to standing committees in the past — from a regional perspective we currently hold about 20.8% of the seats in the Legislature. This bill will effectively reduce that to 20.4% of the representation in the Legislature. As an informed person, do you honestly believe that will effectively or negatively impact the level of representation, the degree of representation, we have in the Legislature?

Ms Smith: If you are referring to the very specific boundaries, none of which have been circulated and all of which we are familiar with, how the incumbent Liberal government has circulated and made them available, all their appointments as returning officers federally have until January 7 or 8 to have their poll maps ready. Representation by population is something that is obviously very important. When you talk about the difference between going to 20.4% from 20.8%, the 0.4% difference isn't dramatic. People who want to exercise our franchise will do it no matter what kind of obstacles this current government and the current federal government put in the way in terms of making it less convenient, making it perhaps less visible, less obvious. Obviously an early federal election call in the new boundaries might confuse some people. The biggest aspect of that would be removing the foot canvass part of the enumeration to actually create the voters list with some integrity.

I personally would not like to see the boundaries changed, but more problematic would be the process. If you engage in a process of eliminating a foot canvass when your own chief bureaucrat who administers it has stated very clearly that the biggest cost of the administration of his department, on current figures that Erik Peters validates, is not the foot-canvass part of it, you should not consider removing door-to-door enumeration.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your input here this morning.

KAREN HASLAM

The Chair: The next presenter is Karen Haslam. Good morning. Welcome to our committee. You have 20 minutes. The floor is yours.

Ms Karen Haslam: Thank you. I'm here to talk about Bill 81, which is called the Fewer Politicians Act. When I got the page that said it was called the Fewer Politicians Act I thought, "What a misnomer." It's not about fewer politicians; it's about fewer representatives, and there is a difference. Where? In rural areas.

As I understand it, the cut in the number of provincial ridings will take 27 representative seats away, 23 of them from rural ridings. That's 23 fewer rural voices at the Legislature. By increasing the size of the ridings you also increase the physical requirements of trying to cover such a large area and decrease the access of constituents to their representatives.

There are many meetings you have to go to in a riding, many community events, and constituents want and deserve to meet their MPPs face to face. If you're going to enlarge your constituents' area, you're going to end up missing a lot of things; you're going to end up not being able to cover all that you should. That's just looking at the organized meetings.

Let's take a look at Perth county. There are three hospitals, two school boards, there's a Christian school, one city, one village, three towns, there are 11 townships, each with their own council and representatives to meet with. There are 66,226 people who now are not going to have one voice at the Legislature. By amalgamation they'll have half a voice. Of that, the farm population is 10,620, but it's interesting to see that in a rural non-farm population it is 14,810 people. So it's not just farm communities; it's also people living in rural communities not totally involved with agricultural work.

There are 485,212 acres and a total of 2,927 farms in Perth. We deal with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, pork producers, dairy farmers, egg producers, the coloured bean association, the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, women for the support of agriculture and the Ontario Farm Women's Network.

In Ontario, Perth is first in cash receipts for dairy cattle, first in hogs marketed, second in white bean acreage, second in mixed grain acreage, second in total milk shipped. When you take a look at the acreage for the total area as a percentage of Ontario, we are 3.5% in total area. When you look at dry white beans, we are 23% acreage. That's in our county for that crop. When you look at wheat and rye and grains we are 6%, we are 12% of the hog producing acreage, 6% of the dairy cattle acreage and 6% of the livestock and poultry acreage. But we seem to be last on your list and not worth a representative to speak for those issues in the Legislature.

1140

Bigger is not better. Joining two separate areas together by amalgamation doesn't make them cohesive, it doesn't make them work together and it doesn't make them more efficient. You might end up creating a rift and dividing our communities and the feelings they have.

Rural areas have long felt that decisions and government policies were Toronto-driven. I believe that changed in the 1990s. Attention was being paid to rural problems, and not just the agricultural part of rural problems. Solutions were suggested from the community and they were acted upon. Why? Because the rural ridings had strong advocates, both in caucuses — I say "caucuses" — and in the government.

The process here has been very rushed. Let me tell you how I found out about this meeting. I was talking on a personal phone call with a friend in Toronto, and she happened to mention that this decision was made on the Monday. I believe I was talking to her on Tuesday. I was really upset. I called the clerk's office and found out that the decision for meetings was made on Monday; the advertisement was on Tuesday, if I'm right; on Wednesday they started to fill the slots; on Thursday you had your first meeting in Toronto; on Saturday you're here in London, once more in Ottawa and you're gone. You haven't hit the rural areas. You haven't allowed enough time for people to put together their research. I envy Kimble Sutherland. He's obviously at the end of a contract, has time to watch the channel, has time to get the Hansard. I don't; I'm working, so as a result I had very little research at my disposal to come before you.

What I did receive from the Legislature was a copy of the debate when Noble Villeneuve brought forward his

resolution earlier. I'm not going to quote Noble Villeneuve, who must be terribly embarrassed about this entire thing. I'm going to talk about the comments from Mr Al McLean, who said: "When we talk about redistribution...there is a difference. In urban Ontario you could represent 200,000 people as easily as you could represent 75,000 in rural Ontario. The criterion being used as population is wrong." That was from Mr Al McLean.

I found that the process was too quick. I mean, it even outdid the omnibus bill which you tried to slither through. I think you are forgetting the constituent in this process, which is not unusual for this government, it seems. We should be looking at how we service constituents, not how many we service.

In urban areas it is easier to get around and it's actually easier to represent a larger number of people in larger cities. In rural areas that's not so. We have a larger physical area, our roads are not as well developed, we have less public transportation available, less development and fewer services. There's no health care clinic every two blocks, there's no school every four blocks, there are no Association for Community Living facilities in small villages, there are no facilities for battered women in outlying areas and there's no bus service to get them to the one that's in my city. Now you are proposing to lessen the service they receive even from their MPPs.

You talked recently about mirroring the federal riding boundaries, but we do not mirror the federal programs. Provincial programs are much more complex and detailed to operate. We deal with education at a provincial level; the federals deal with defence. We deal with health care; they deal with international trade. We deal with the environment; they deal with passports. I know that my federal MP does not have as busy a schedule as the provincial MPP.

I think this is more about politics than about representation. This bill will change the political landscape of Ontario. I'm going to be very blunt. I think this is gerrymandering, pure and simple.

I mentioned that I didn't have access to a lot of facts and figures. I got up at 5 am to write my speech because I was working on Thursday and Friday. I sat at an office in London, because I was in London in meetings yesterday, at 4:30 waiting for faxes to come in about some of these issues, so I took my time and looked up "gerrymander" in the dictionary: "(1) Manipulate the boundaries of (a constituency etc) so as to give undue influence to some party or class. (2) Manipulate (a situation etc) to gain advantage." It's interesting that this practice comes from Governor Gerry of Massachusetts, and the last part of the word comes from salamander, because that was the shape of the district or political map that was drawn when he was in office: "gerrymander."

When I lived in British Columbia the Social Credit Party gerrymandered a riding there to allow one of their members to be elected. It was called Gracie's Finger, because the riding looked like that. They had a bump in it that took in an area they knew was going to give her votes, and she got elected. I don't think we have a Gracie's Finger here; I think we have a Mike's Fist.

I truly believe that's what this is about, so I'm going to say to the opposition, and you're not going to like my

comments: Wake up. Call it what it is. Stop pussyfooting around. They are subverting democracy; they are subverting a process here; they are subverting access in many ways. They have no hearts; they have no conscience; they have no moral or Christian ethics towards those less fortunate in our communities.

When I was waiting for that fax yesterday there was a sign in the office. I've updated it: "Due to the actions of this current government, the light at the end of the tunnel will be turned off until further notice." May I say something to add to that? "Possibly at least until the next election."

I want you to get your flashlights out. You need to turn the spotlight on these despicable actions, the lack of process. We will not recognize Ontario in 18 months. Our Ontario, our caring society, will be subverted by mean-spirited politicians. Maybe then you should introduce an act that is truly titled the Fewer Politicians Act.

The Chair: Two minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the NDP.

Ms Haslam: With all due respect, I've been to your committee meetings before and what I've seen this morning only shows me that it's going to be another Ms Ecker who spends the entire time producing pap. I don't feel that's a genuine value of my time or yours.

The Chair: Okay, we are now recessed until 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1151 to 1301.

ROBERT DE LA PENOTIERE

The Chair: Welcome back to hearings on Bill 81. Our presenter scheduled for this time has not arrived yet, but Mr Bob de la Penotiere is in attendance and has agreed to come forward and make his presentation now. Welcome to our committee, sir. The floor is yours.

Mr Robert de la Penotiere: Before I begin my presentation, I guess I should point out that I am currently employed as the executive assistant to Peter North, the MPP in Elgin. In that capacity it is my job, of course, to schedule him and all the other good things, schedule the staff and run the staff. That is how I am appearing here today. I'm not appearing here today as Peter's employee or spouting Peter's views. These are views coming from my job as a scheduler.

I wish to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak today to Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. First, I believe this act is poorly named and is named simply to appeal to the general public. Ask anyone if they would like fewer politicians and of course they will say yes, myself probably included. However, if you explain the implications of this act, especially the fact that this bill will mean less contact with their member and/or his staff, they will then have a totally different view. I believe this act should be more properly named The How to Get Less Representation and Probably Pay More Act, or The Final Kiss-Off to Rural and Northern Ontario Act.

During second reading debate on Bill 81, it was pointed out by government members, some rather high-ranking members, that a member of the provincial Parliament should be able to represent the same number of constituents as a federal member of Parliament. How ridiculous. This is like saying that if a hamburger flipper

at a fast-food outlet is able to serve 2,000 people per day, it should hold true that a full-fledged chef should be able to serve the same number.

Much is made of the phrase "rep by pop," and I believe that by and large this is likely the way we should look at setting riding boundaries. However, having said this, first we have to determine what a member has to do before we decide how many constituents one should be expected to represent. Let me explain.

The duties of members in the Legislative Assembly and Parliament are primarily the same and consume by and large the same amount of time. However, when we look at constituency work, we find a tremendous difference in the workload. An MP deals with a variety of issues which mainly centre on Canada and old age pensions, UI problems — or I guess EI problems now — immigration and some municipal issues. In the case of an MPP, most of the issues of concern to the constituents are provincial in nature. They include, but are not limited to, education issues, including school boards; welfare; the Family Benefits Act; the Workers' Compensation Board; retail sales tax; the Ontario Drug Benefit Act; OHIP in general; most community agencies, such as the Association for Community Living; family and children's services; continuing care etc; most seniors' problems are provincially based, as well as the many problems and needs of the disabled; municipalities and councils; and, yes, let's not forget the family support plan. The list goes on and on, but I am sure all members of this panel are aware of this.

If we look at municipalities and councils, I am sure all will agree that most of the issues which arise in this area are of a provincial nature and consume a large amount of a member's time trying to sort things out with various ministries and agencies. Members must spend a lot of time working with municipal councils in their ridings on these issues.

In our case, we have 17 municipalities and councils in the riding, which are basically rural in nature. However, under the expanded boundaries, this number would be increased by seven, one of which is a very large urban municipality and would consume considerable time of a member. Most MPs, however, require little time for these types of issues, as most municipal issues deal with the provincial government.

Workers' compensation, in a riding of 60,000, consumes the time of one staff member on a full-time basis in a rural riding such as ours. To add an additional 23,000 constituents to that riding, 85% of whom are urban dwellers, would probably double the workload in this area alone. I could go on and on, but I am sure every member of this committee is well aware of what I say when I compare the workloads of MPs and MPPs.

We constantly hear of the downloading of responsibilities from the federal government to the province, and I believe this to be true. If this situation continues — and I'm sure it will — the workload gap will only widen and make the members' abilities to represent even more eroded.

So what do we do? I would suggest that this committee suggest in the strongest terms that we should study very carefully this whole idea of aligning riding boundaries

with federal boundaries and, rather, look at the workload and geographical makeup of ridings and then come back with a reasonable plan to make some changes where possible.

I believe we should also realize that when the federal government did its realignment of ridings, in fact the number of ridings in Ontario increased from 99 to 103, which only tells me that they looked closely at the workloads, population and geographical matters when coming up with their final decision.

I do not believe this government has looked at all at the implications this will have on representation and a member's ability to properly carry out his or her duties, but have simply decided this was a campaign promise and, regardless, they will plow ahead and jam it down the throats of Ontarians. The government should have formulated a plan rather than just aimed at a campaign target.

I urge this committee to use common sense and to recommend to the government sensible solutions that will be just for all Ontario. Further, if it is a question of saving money, which I do not believe this scheme will do, I suggest you seriously consider the suggestions made by the independent member for Elgin during the second reading debate. This is a certain way to achieve those savings now, not four years from now.

I ask this panel to give serious thought to the effects that Bill 81 will have on rural and northern Ontario. It will be devastating. Just to add to that, I would like to point out that the government in the last election campaign made two promises that are very significant in this area. One was that they would cut the number of ridings. The second point they made was that they will not erode the representation in rural Ontario, will not erode rural Ontario. Those were two very clear promises made in the Common Sense Revolution. One way or another, the government is going to break one of those promises. I suggest, and I would think that this committee should suggest, that if you're going to break one, the one to break is Bill 81, because the people in rural Ontario need the representation. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We've got about three minutes or so per caucus for questions, beginning with the NDP.

1310

Mrs Boyd: Thank you very much for coming today, Bob. I know you were wanting to speak from the position of constituency representation. I guess the biggest issue for Elgin county is its length and the sparsity of many of your population pockets and the real difficulty of doing that kind of work, without adding that huge piece of Middlesex that's going to get added under this situation. Do you want to comment a little bit on what it will mean to the people of Elgin county?

Mr de la Penotiere: The member's time is what basically concerns me, the member's time and his staff's time. When we have, as I said in the presentation, 17 municipalities, and we add seven more to that, that is devastating. That is a tremendous workload. I don't care what anybody says; you have to spend a lot of time with your municipal councils. That in itself is going to be a major, major problem.

I believe also that adding 23,000 additional, basically urban, people into the riding will take away the rural representation eventually. I don't think it will in the next election, but I think eventually it will. That is of major concern in rural Ontario, and rightfully so; it should be. I don't expect anyone who lives in an urban setting, who lives in a city, to be able to go out and pick up farm issues. They're very complex and they're very, very important.

Mr Martin: It's good, as Mrs Boyd has said, that somebody like yourself comes forward to talk about the issue of the workload of MPPs. When we do it, it comes across as quite self-serving and is difficult to do. We differ in opinion with some of the members across the way — I'm not sure how others feel — who are actually doing the job of MPP and finding how difficult that is at times.

I'm interested, though, in the process. You obviously table some very compelling arguments about why we shouldn't go ahead with Bill 81. There are others who come forward and make arguments about why we should. There's nobody, I don't think, saying we shouldn't visit this issue of how we represent people at the Parliament in Queen's Park. The process, the time lines, the fact that we're not going to a commission this time around, for the first time: What is your comment re that whole piece of this?

Mr de la Penotiere: I think I'd be kicking myself in the face if I said we should have a commission. I'm not a big believer of commissions. But I do believe that 130 MPPs in Ontario, in this province, are necessary. I do believe there have to be some adjustments — I don't think there's any doubt about that — especially when we have a look in Metro where we have some ridings with 140,000 people. In an urban riding I believe an MPP can serve more people because of the compactness of the riding; they don't have all the municipal councils etc to deal with.

When I come at this, I come at it as the guy who has to find a 25th hour, every single day, for my member, and that's a pretty hard hour to find. I know that if we add this much more municipal and this much more work to that individual in a rural riding, it just isn't going to work. It just won't work. People will not be served.

Mr Maves: Thank you for coming forward today. I noticed you have been with us most of the day. I appreciate that. There is one point you made at the start, though, when you were presenting a difference between MPs and MPPs. It's a common theme that I've heard from many presenters, that the MPP does things which are more day-to-day or somehow more significant in the daily lives of people than the federal MPs. I've always taken exception to that. The reason is that I used to work for a federal member; I've had some experience working as a legislative assistant to a federal member.

You said a few things, like unemployment insurance and Canada pension plan, which obviously affect the daily lives, and these are federal issues. Here are some others, though: Young Offenders Act; victims' rights; firearms; federal courts and sentencing; passports; visas; citizenship applications; immigration applications; literacy programs; disability from Health and Welfare; old age

security; guaranteed income supplements; spouses' allowance; widows' allowance; orphans' allowance; Canadian work permits; social insurance numbers; a plethora of training programs; RCMP; federal penitentiaries; parole; drug strategies; Revenue Canada — a lot of issues there: appeals, GST, payroll problems; child tax credit; veterans' benefits, pensions and recognitions.

Really, to be fair — I'm not trying to challenge you in any way, but having working in both areas I think there's a significant amount of things that happen in an MP's office on a day-to-day basis. I don't think there are any less than there are at the provincial level. I would also point out that at the provincial level, while we deal with schools, we also have, in my area, 68 school board trustees to help deal with schools on a day-to-day basis. We also have hospital boards and so on and so forth. To be fair, the federal members have just as many significant things on a day-to-day basis as we do.

Mr de la Penotiere: Just to comment on that briefly: I work very closely with a federal MP's office as well. I'm not saying that MPs are underworked. Don't get me wrong. They represent 90,000 people; they average 97,000.

What I am saying is that the people who call with the urgent "I've got to do it now" problems are basically provincially geared. When I take a look at the various applications we're talking about — and again, I'm not jumping on an MP — we handle more birth certificate applications in a week than they handle, of those kinds of applications that you were talking about, in a year. We handle more birth certificate applications. We don't just send them to Thunder Bay; we take them to Toronto. We handle all birth certificate applications that come through the riding; they come through our office. In that sense and providing that service, I can tell you right now, because I've studied this stuff very closely, we handle more of those than they would handle in a year of the other types of applications you were talking about.

Mrs Pupatello: Thank you for your presentation, Bob. I'm interested in your comments regarding the Office of the Premier. As you probably know, estimates were required to be submitted to the standing committee on estimates that indicate that the Office of the Premier went from, in the year 1995-96, an expenditure of \$1.8 million to, in 1996-97, \$2.7 million.

Do you find it interesting that on the one hand cutting the number of MPPs is some attempt at cost-saving, but in the Office of the Premier, where the power is being centralized, he's actually increased his office by close to \$1 million? In effect, we see this enhancement of the executive branch of government, where the other branch of government, being the elected body, has less of a role to play. But the executive branch — unelected, behind the scenes, unavailable to the people — in fact has more power and they are spending more money in the face of such a large deficit in Ontario, in the face of all the other excuses they've given for what they're doing to elected representatives, and they are increasing the Office of the Premier by nearly \$1 million.

Mr de la Penotiere: Yes, I've read that. I saw that in the estimates and so on and so forth. I guess we have some concerns there, but we have a lot of other concerns

about government as well, and I'm sure you're aware of those. You debated this with Peter on Inquiry.

The fact of the matter is that we believe that if we want to maintain representation we can do away with a lot of things in government to get rid of a lot of cost in government, number one, parliamentary assistants. Peter has been very clear about it: They're not necessary, they do nothing for the people of the province of Ontario. We believe caucus services can be cut down. We believe the amount of money given to each party for their caucus services and caucus budget can be cut dramatically because that is only planning the next election campaign. We believe there are a lot of ways to cut money out of government, and Peter has put those — I'm sure you all are aware of it, you sit in the House with him — ideas forward.

We have also a very major problem with the \$4 million that is spent on election rebates. That is ridiculous. When somebody loses an election, they get \$9,000 or \$10,000. Somebody who wins the election gets nothing from the government, from the taxpayers' money — ridiculous, totally ridiculous.

If you want to cut money, I say to the government members, and you want to have some ideas, come and see us. We've got a bunch of them. Probably your party isn't going to like it too well, but we've got them.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We do appreciate your input here today.

1320

AB CHAHBAR

The Chair: Our next presenter is Ab Chahbar. Good afternoon, sir. Welcome to our committee.

Mr Ab Chahbar: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here before you this afternoon. I see on the agenda that I'm shown as a London public board trustee. I'm here making a presentation as a citizen and not as a board trustee. Also, I think my presentation and comments are going to be very simplistic. They're not political. They're not meant to be political. They're meant to be common sense.

Should the number of MPPs be reduced? Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you this afternoon regarding Bill 81 that's before you now. It's only through this consultation process and public hearing forums that governments can make informed decisions and enact legislation that has the support of the public.

The number of electoral districts in Ontario should be reduced to correspond with the federal riding boundaries, so we should go from 130 to 103, as I believe the numbers are now. The test should be fair and equitable representation. I have always questioned the fact that Ontario has always had some 30% more members in the provincial Legislature than in the federal Parliament. This might imply that more is better, that we are better served at the provincial level than we are at the federal level, or more at the local level than at the provincial level. Ladies and gentlemen, I don't think so. If anything, in Ontario we are overrepresented.

Let us take this great city that you're in today, London, Ontario, as a simple illustration. I see three members here

from London, and some of our neighbouring members also. In London we have three federal MPs, four provincial MPPs, 18 city officers, 18 public education trustees and some 14 separate education trustees. Ladies and gentlemen, that represents some 40 elected officers — and I appreciate that everybody does different duties — to represent a population of 320,000 people. That would be about one representative for 8,000 citizens. That is too much representation.

Elected people today are tripping over each other, and in this economic environment each is fighting for their own turf. We hear that from the public on a daily basis. Many have lost their sense of duty and responsibility and are seen by the public as only trying to protect their jobs at any cost. I'll give you an example. The London Board of Education reduced its public trustees from 16 to 14 prior to the 1994 municipal election. My ward was one of the wards that lost one trustee. I can assure you that my ward has not suffered at all. If anything, it has received better representation than in past years. One other thing I can assure you is that we have not received one complaint in the last three years because the numbers were cut from 16 to 14, and we represent 60,000 citizens in the ward. What Ontarians need is better-quality representation and not more representation.

Another test should be that no region of our province should be underrepresented. Representation should be based on population in urban ridings, and in rural ridings we must keep in mind the geographical distances. If we're looking at 40,000 or 50,000 or 80,000 in an urban riding, the numbers would be smaller in the rural ridings. Again, what we're looking for is equitable representation and not more representation. It only makes common sense, which in politics is not so common, as per the public view these days.

We should move to the federal riding boundaries because, in addition to reducing the number of MPPs, we can pursue with the federal government the pooling and non-duplication of resources such as electoral lists and so on and so forth. This could help both levels of government and save the much-strapped taxpayer some additional money.

I don't know what the exact saving of going from 130 members to 103 members would be, but an educated guess would be that if we take a local MPP and look at their local office, their Toronto office, staff in both centres, accommodation and so on and so forth, it would be in the \$350,000 to \$400,000 range. If you reduce by 27, basing it on about \$400,000, that's pretty close to \$11 million. Now, in the Ontario budget scheme of things that may not seem like a hell of a lot, but it's a step in the right direction: \$11 million to some cash-strapped communities in the province would be a very welcome relief.

It's more than a symbolic gesture to controlling costs. The 1990s are years of doing more with less, corporate and job force reorganizations, restructurings: These are the catchwords and phrases of the 1990s. Governments are telling us to practise the foregoing. It's great to see them practising what they preach, because when they are asking us to tighten our belts they can point to how they are doing.

It's not the old adage, "Do as I say, not as I do." Ladies and gentlemen, I don't see this as political opportunism by the government of the day but as a long-overdue correction that has taken some hundred years to happen. It is time that we Ontarians put aside our political differences and welcomed these proposed changes. Those members in the Legislature — I'm not talking about the government of the day — who support this change should be commended.

We must get away from self-serving and go back to being public servants. We must restore the honour and dignity of elected office. It is extremely important that we serve the citizenry and not ourselves. The public says, "You don't care anyway." I hear this on a regular basis. I say back to the public, "It's your duty to hold politicians accountable." Politicians can bring back the dignity of the office. It's only through their actions that we can continue to attract the good-quality candidates to represent us at all levels of government. Only the actions and deeds of politicians can get us away from that.

I think I'll leave you with a quote made by BC's former premier, Mike Harcourt. He's talking about politicians and he simply said, "Your status as a politician will mean you are placed, in the public estimation, in the ranks of crooks, liars and, as polls show, used-car salesmen."

Ladies and gentlemen, again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you.

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The Chair: Thank you, Mr Chahbar. We have about three minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the government.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Mr Chahbar, for your comments. Maybe that's why Mike Harcourt is no longer in politics.

We've heard this morning and in the last couple of days that big is not better, and many of those folks who are opposed to this are constantly telling us that big is not better, yet Ontario has 130 MPPs against 99 MPs. Is that not a reason to have a look at it?

Mr Chahbar: Absolutely, sir, and I think that's how I started my comments this afternoon. Certainly if anyone is saying that the 99 members in the federal Parliament are not serving their constituents as well as the 130 provincial members, I think our system has a problem, and again I think we should divorce ourselves from the politics of parties.

With all due respect to you as provincial members, I don't think we're any less served by the 99 members in the federal Parliament in Ontario, and I do welcome the change of going from the 130 we have right now to I think the 103 who are proposed in Bill 81 and not the 99 that we have today. So I agree with you.

Mr Stewart: Good. Two other fast questions. Do you believe what Bill 81 is trying to do infringes on or interferes in any way with democracy? That's number one. Number two is, and you've been in the political arena as a board trustee, do you believe, and I appreciate that you only represent an urban riding, that you could also represent well both urban and rural?

Mr Chahbar: I think your first question, talking about the democracy of it, this is the democratic process at

work, so I don't have a problem with that. The bill, I would assume, is not being rammed through the Legislature. That's the purpose of these meetings.

Your second part, urban-rural, yes, I think we have to look at the makeup of our rural ridings. We have to look at the geography and distances of it. Would it be fair to have the same people representation in an urban riding as you do in a rural riding? I don't think so. But the answer would be, yes, I think we can and you can give the fair and equitable representation in the urban and the rural setting.

Mrs Pupatello: An impartial researcher provided a report that was available to all members of all sides of the House. What was interesting about it was that in the reduction of the seats in the federal House, the average MP, which is taken as an average across Canada, will represent 98,000 constituents. In Ontario, when it's reduced to 103, each member will represent, on average, 107,000. As a result, Ontario MPPs will have the largest constituencies, on average, of any Legislature in the country. Those are facts that are not partisan; those are just simply facts.

You mentioned a couple of things in your presentation. You said that in this economic environment, this is really a good thing to do. In this same economic environment in which you believe that cost-cutting is essential, how do you feel about the Premier's office increasing their expenditures by close to \$1 million?

Mr Chahbar: That's a question as to the Premier's office, or can I make comments to —

Mrs Pupatello: My question is, how do you feel about, in this economic environment, which you agree is significant — we really have to watch our expenditures — that in the course of one year it is going from \$1.8 million in expenditures to \$2.7 million? This is one office where the balance of power lies, certainly, and in this same economic environment you agree to cost-cutting measures. How do you juxtapose that with this massive increase in the Premier's office?

Mr Chahbar: It simply goes back, if you were listening to what I was saying, that this is not politics and we should not be playing politics with this.

Mrs Pupatello: So you agree with the increase then?

Mr Chahbar: You've asked a question. I'll offer you an answer. If that happened and if that is factual, I don't agree with it, okay? I'll make it clear. I'm not here to represent one party or another. You have indicated earlier also in your comments about the restructuring that Ontario MPPs then would be representing 107,000 people. So be it. Are you saying that you are less capable than the federal member? We have 99 federal members that represent this province. Are you saying that the provincial members are less capable than the federal members and that you need 130 members to represent —

Mrs Pupatello: Actually, my point is that you need to work from the facts, and the facts are, regardless —

Mr Chahbar: Madam, the facts —

Mrs Pupatello: Excuse me. Regardless of your opinion, the fact is, whether anyone agrees or not, that Ontario MPPs will have the largest constituencies in the country. Be that as it may, agree or disagree, that's simply a fact, and I want you to work from that.

You did say something else that was interesting. You said this money that's going to be saved by the cut — you estimated it at about \$10 million or \$11 million — is going to mean so much to the "cash-strapped communities." Are you under the impression that they're getting the money?

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Papatello. Mrs Boyd.

Mr Chahbar: I'd be happy to talk to you later about it.

Mrs Boyd: There's a real fallacy. In your first statements you were talking about how distressing it is that there are four members — three federal members and four provincial members. If you've read the bill and if you look at the boundaries, in fact what we're looking at in London-Middlesex is an increase because of the way Middlesex county is hacked up into four different ridings. So every time one of us wants to contact the other members who deal with this jurisdiction, we have to contact now seven.

So there's a real fallacy here, if you look at our particular circumstances, in terms of what this redistribution means provincially. It's a real difficulty for a county like Middlesex, which now will have to constantly be dealing with all of these people, and it is exactly counter-productive to what you purport to think is a good idea. For our local situation, this is nuts. It is going to make it more difficult for all of us, as citizens in London-Middlesex, to deal with our federal and provincial people. That's a problem, number one.

The other fallacy that I would say is present in what you're saying is you do not seem to accept what my colleague from Windsor-Sandwich says about the numbers. Ontario already has the highest numbers of people who need to be represented by every MPP, by far the highest in the country, and this will be substantially higher again. It's not quite double, but it's certainly a great deal more.

I think it's important when we talk about this to be really clear factually about what this bill is going to accomplish in terms of representation.

Mr Chahbar: Thank you, Mrs Boyd. I do agree with the facts, no question about it, and I did indicate to your colleague from Windsor that I'd be happy to talk to her about that later.

The facts are simple. The facts are 99 federal members and 130 provincial members. You can use all the other numbers you want to throw at me. Those are the facts. Those are the only facts I will accept as a citizen: 99 federal members and 130 provincial members. You can throw 107 at me, you can throw 104 at me, throw whatever number you want; the facts are 99 and 130. They are not polling facts; they're real. That's the membership.

My understanding of Bill 81 is that the boundaries will correspond — that's the wording I use — with the federal boundaries. Again, the question becomes, are you saying or is this group saying it takes more Ontario MPPs to represent them than federal MPs, that the federal membership is better equipped on the basis of 99 and 130? Those are the facts. I don't want to know polling; I just want to know the facts.

Mrs Boyd: We're not saying that. What we are saying is that every other province has a much greater represen-

tation at the provincial level because of the issues. That's what I'm saying.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Chahbar. We do appreciate your input here this afternoon.

1340

CHRIS CASSIDY

The Chair: Next is Chris Cassidy. Good afternoon, Mr Cassidy, and welcome to our committee. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr Chris Cassidy: I'm here really as an individual, but I think in fairness I should say that I'm somewhat partisan. I'm the president of the London North provincial riding association for the Liberal Party, in London obviously.

The last commentator suggested he wanted just the facts, and I think I'll ad lib for a moment. In Dickens's works there was a character named Mr Grandgrind, and his line was always "Just the facts." What the facts allowed Mr Grandgrind to do, if you've read *Great Expectations*, is to ignore the misery that his vision of the facts imposed on most of that society. I am concerned here that perhaps this committee and indeed this government are doing that, sometimes wilfully, sometimes not.

We are told that this is a Fewer Politicians Act, and I congratulate the government on the brilliance of its naming of its act. I think it is an eminently clever strategy. You've been doing it consistently, and more power to you for that. However, I think that beyond the facts, we have to ask something on a second level or second order of level, if you wish, about process.

The democratic process, as I understand it and as I think many people have understood it, is one in which it is necessary for governments to use the opposition, to use the public hearing process as a means to indeed improve their legislation. Perhaps the members to my left don't believe this or perhaps the Premier does not, but generally legislation does not come out perfected despite the good attempts to do so, and on occasion oppositions or public hearings or experts and others are able to improve that.

As well, I think a healthy democracy requires a process of open and fair public consultation. That requires fair warning. I got a call late Wednesday, and I managed to get hold of the person Thursday, telling me about these hearings. Indeed, it seems the opposition was not informed about these hearings until Monday, and then they scrambled to inform people. I'm not certain, and perhaps someone on the committee can inform me, whether there was proper notice in the newspapers. I didn't see any, but there may have been. I've been quite busy and wasn't able to check in the last couple of days.

For the members of the government, I think whether they're in cabinet or out, governments are not elected to govern as though they were touched by the hand of God. Despite your majority, you have not been. Indeed, I think you risk, in the manner in which you are governing in this bill and on this issue, with the short notice and inadequate notice given to the public, and with Bill 26 and all that flows from it, you risk, in effect, shattering the democratic process in an effort to put together and

pass a series of initiatives which you've proposed to the electorate and seem to believe should be passed without any input at all by the public. There's a Stalinistic arrogance to your Premier in the way he deals with these things, and it leads to problems in process.

I think, for the members of the government who are here, you have a responsibility not just to the Conservative Party, not just to the government you have formed, but indeed to all members of Ontario to make certain that in handling the responsibilities of government, that power is used, if you wish, with a velvet glove. It has not been. The velvet glove has been taken off and the process is being perverted.

The fact of the matter is that you could pass this bill and have reasonable public hearings with reasonable notice across the province. The decision has been made not to act that way, and it is unfortunate. It seems to me that it endangers goodwill in terms of the democratic process across this province. It is the reason why one of the earlier speakers refused your questions, and it is unfortunate because it ill serves us all. I suggest that when you go back to your back benches or to cabinet, you suggest to the three or four people who seem to be running this province that they run it with a little more democratic process, for a start.

Napoleon said, "Make haste slowly." Duncan Sinclair, the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, has stated, and this is a quote, that they will be "reluctant to make any further recommendations on the cuts unless the government reinvests." Brett James, the assistant to the Minister of Health, responded to this, because Mr Wilson was not available, by suggesting — and this is not a quote but this is how it was written in the London Free Press — that "these delays are due to the slow machinations of a new process."

What I'm trying to illustrate by this is the fact that you've ignored Napoleon. By rushing through this once again and by using and abusing process, you find yourselves in a position where your very own political appointees are saying: "Hold it, slow down. We're going too fast. We can't handle it. You're not able to reinvest," and your political hacks are saying: "Hey, sorry. It's a new process. It takes time."

No kidding. We could have told you that. But you're not taking the time; hence you're having problems; hence we all will pay a price. I suggest you change the process and respect it. That, it seems to me, is a fundamental problem at this level, in these hearings and consistently with this government.

Beyond that, I think the reduction ignores the fact that provincial politics have a greater impact on people's lives. There are many more solutions and problems you have to deal with as MPPs that are local in nature, and the bigger the boundaries, the less local you are going to be, the less effective you are going to be — and you know what? — the more your constituents are going to feel shut out of this process.

The Premier said, "People have told us repeatedly that government is too big, too cumbersome, too unresponsive to the needs of the people who pay for it: the taxpayers." Well, I'm a taxpayer, and what I'm going to suggest to you is that you will not be more responsive with fewer of you there; you will be less responsive.

The perception of government is not how many people are sitting in Queen's Park, in the sense that it's irrelevant; the perception for all parties is, how well can you serve your constituents? Fewer of you will make it more difficult. It will further bring into disrepute that which you do as politicians, which I don't cast aspersions on. I think many of you make great sacrifices on all sides to do this job. It's a necessary job. But the fact of the matter is, by cutting down, you are hurting yourselves, you are hurting the process, and it will be harder to be an effective MPP. Your constituents will be more unhappy, and the Premier will wonder why. Well, it's because he's made a mistake with this bill.

Politicians are not equal. Maybe we should have just 103 mayors in Ontario. We'll cut that up along federal lines. It seems just as reasonable as this, just as arbitrary. There is no argument that has been made except for a — well, the CSR said a \$1-million saving; now it's \$11 million. Whatever the number is, there is no argument being made in terms of the democratic process that this is a necessary thing to do. It's great politics but it's bad for democracy. You may win some votes — "Oh, yeah, they fired a few politicians; maybe we'll vote for them next time" — but the bottom line is you are going to hurt the ability of the government and of Queen's Park as a whole to represent the people of Ontario.

You can do it with arrogance and indifference, and I don't really have to worry about that because you are going to do it anyway. But I think it's a mistake and you should think about it. You should think clearly about how you're going to tell the people of Ontario, when they lack representation and when they have more trouble getting hold of you and when you can less serve them that, "We're sorry, part of the reason is we decided to save you \$1 million, which we then put in the Premier's office." It seems to me that you have been entrusted, all of you, to protect the health of our democracy, and it seems to me that you are failing to do this on all these counts.

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Finally, I would just like to say one other danger is inherent in this type of bill — and it seems to be maybe inherent in the way this government is choosing to govern — which is the danger of centralization. One of the ironies here is that Mr Harris and your government seemed to be elected on a populist wave, but you're not acting like populists. You're acting like people who have a fair bit of indifference to the population. You are creating a system in which it is going to be harder for the people who elected you to get your help when they need your help. It's just sort of an irony, perhaps a predictable one, but it is an irony none the less.

With that, I would like just to suggest to the members of the government that they go back and they say to their fellow members and they say to Mr Harris, "Jeez, maybe we should be a little slower at what we do; maybe we should even go so far as to say we should foster discussion," because in discussion there may occasionally be a glimmer of wisdom or an idea you haven't thought of. I know the government may think it's thought of all ideas, but in fact out there, there are other ideas.

Finally, there are a couple of presenters I know who are trying to make it, but when we tried to get to people, we only had, by the time the call was made and we were able to get that information out, less than a day. I think that offends the process. It offends the process as well that people within the political parties have to go and make phone calls for a public hearing because it's not properly advertised. We're desperately calling municipal politicians in the area and others, not necessarily who are Liberal; just, "Try and come out if you're interested." More time should have been given. It was not. On that you have no cause for celebration and should perhaps think in future to schedule these things with more warning and do it properly; otherwise, better not do it at all. It is in this case I think a bit of a mockery. I certainly would not be here if there had been enough warning. I don't think it is necessary for me to have been here if there had been enough warning, but the fact is you don't even have a full slate. I don't think there is any defence on that issue.

The Chair: I've got about three minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the Liberals.

Mr Sergio: Mr Cassidy, thank you very much for your presentation. I have many questions similar to the ones we've been asking yesterday and today and Thursday in Toronto, but let me ask a new one here. You're familiar with the possibility that the government is thinking of amalgamating the six municipalities in Metro Toronto?

Mr Cassidy: Yes.

Mr Sergio: It's also a well-known fact that the province has been saying, "You've got to do more with less."

Mr Cassidy: Yes.

Mr Sergio: He has been telling us; he has been telling the people of Ontario. Minister Leach is thinking of amalgamating the six municipalities and creating a supercity, with a supercouncil of about 44 supercity or Metro councillors or regional councillors, whatever they may want to call them at the end.

Given then the intention of the government that we should be doing more with less and with fewer resources as well, do you also believe that if that is the way the government is going to go, it should be thinking of this supercity, with the same number of elected officials as the number of MPPs in Metro Toronto?

Mr Cassidy: I said at one point the 103-mayor solution — you can just divide up the province into 103 ridings, make them all cities and say we're going to have 103 mayors. It was meant tongue in cheek, but the arbitrariness of this decision, which is just, "Oh, the feds are doing it," seems to be just as good a reason to do what they're doing as any other. I don't understand the reasoning behind the decision to do that.

Mr Sergio: Sorry, I don't want to cut you off. I just want to try and get another question. If 22 MPPs can do the business in Metro Toronto, couldn't 22 city councillors do the same good job representing the people?

Mr Cassidy: Just quickly, my sense would be this: The principle of representation by population changes at each level. The closer you are to the people, the more representation you need. At least, that's been the assumption. That's why you have more city councillors in a city than you do MPPs or MPs. So my sense would be no, I

don't think they'll be as well served and I think it's a rather short-sighted policy. That is why we have more MPPs. It has nothing to do with the "efficiency" of the system; it's because it is generally held to be true that you need more to do the job because you have more to do and you need to be closer to the constituents.

Mr Sergio: Should we have the same resources as the local MP, since we'll be representing the same constituency, the same geographic area?

Mr Cassidy: Since on a municipal level they get very few resources, I suspect the government might find that a really neat idea of saving money. But I would say no, you probably need more resources than, say, a city councillor does. I would presume, to do their job, and that's legitimate. Again, the cost factor seems to me to be secondary here.

Mr Martin: I think your presentation here today is both timely and right on. Certainly the process begs some attention on this weekend as we prepare to celebrate Remembrance Day on Monday and the memory of our forefathers who fought for democracy and how important that was to them and how important it should continue to be to us, that we would be rushing through a bill of this nature, which is so fundamentally going to change the way we do representative democracy in this province.

Not only has there been traditionally an arm's-length commission set up, on occasion, when the Legislature decided that it was time to review this kind of issue and a back-and-forth between the Legislature and that commission as parameters were developed and other things were brought into consideration, but bills in the Legislature traditionally, over time, were debated at first and second reading in the House. Then in the intersession they go out, when you have lots of time to do public consultation all over the province and the luxury to do research and have proper observation made.

This isn't the case. This government has at least two or three more years before it has to go back to the polls and determine what the boundaries will be. Why we're doing this in two months is beyond me. I think you make some excellent points there.

I'm not sure, by way of question, what I should ask you here, because you've put it so well. Is there anything else that you would like to add to that?

Mr Cassidy: Just briefly, what I would say is I don't notice anyone on this list — and I may be wrong; maybe someone came — I don't notice that there were an awful lot of people from the University of Western Ontario, an institution that probably has the occasional political scientist hanging around, maybe a philosopher or two. You would think they might be people you would want to hear from. You know what? I don't think they know. I think that is both a travesty and a bit of a tragedy. My academic background is intellectual history and such, but there are political theorists up there who could maybe inform us a bit. They're not here, I don't think, and if they're not here it's because no effort was made to allow them to be here. I don't think there's really any reason for that to have happened.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Cassidy, for coming forward. I thank you for putting your affiliation on the table. I think it's appropriate, and I say that quite sincere-

ly. In that context, I'd like to quote you something from the Liberal red book. Much has been said about denigrating our assortment of promises called the Common Sense Revolution. Very little has been said about what your party ran on: "Public cynicism is not without foundation. When many promises are made and few are kept, the public becomes sceptical. In this climate of mistrust, the onus is on government to show that honesty, integrity, accountability and openness can be part of the political process."

On the next page it says that: "The Liberal government will tackle this challenge head-on. We will show leadership in reducing government spending by cutting political staff and cutting services to MPPs." I wonder if you can reconcile that phrase with your premise that somehow if we make the ridings larger, the increased workload similarly divides the amount of time perhaps an MPP might have per constituent, but we haven't said anything about cutting back on the resources of staff and other things available to the existing MPPs —

Mr Sergio: You surely have.

Mr Gilchrist: — to the existing or retained MPPs, whereas your party said it would cut all political staff and all services to all MPPs. How do you reconcile those two things?

Mr Cassidy: First of all, let's understand something. One of the reasons I am involved in the party is that I think the red book was a failure, so I'm just going to put that on the table. I don't think I have to reconcile it from this perspective. There can be an argument made that, for instance, we could not increase the budget of the Premier's office by \$900,000 so he can put a few more \$100,000-plus consultants in, and that would be the equivalent of saying that maybe the MPPs could do with \$20,000 or \$30,000 less and make do. I don't think that's an illegitimate way to go. That is fundamentally different from saying, "We're going to cut dramatically the number of MPPs, based on an arbitrary figure" — and it is arbitrary. You didn't go through a process where you decided to find out what was useful for Ontario.

Mr Gilchrist: Forgive me; we did.

Mr Cassidy: You may think you did, but you basically picked the federal number.

Mr Gilchrist: I was part of the process; I know we did.

Mr Cassidy: Okay, you did, and you ended up picking the federal number. The bottom line here is that there is a fundamental difference between those two processes. If somebody said to you, "I'm going to take 5% or 10% off your budget and make do," you would probably say, "Okay, my printing won't have to be glossy paper; it'll have to be plain stock." You would find ways to economize. It's fundamentally different from saying to somebody: "We're going to take away a third of your staff, period. Good luck." There's a huge difference. Understand something: That claim was about budgets and money; this is about representation — I guess you don't listen to what I say — in a democracy and whether or not cutting back on that representation serves the democracy and serves the constituents. An arbitrary change doesn't necessarily do that. You have given no argument to me and I have heard no argument and I've seen nothing in

the press that suggests, other than an arbitrary decision at the end of the day, that this number of MPPs is better for people in Ontario. It is in fact not better.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Cassidy, we believed it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Cassidy. We appreciate your input here today.

Our next presenter, Larry Crossan, is not here yet. He's not due till 2:20, so we'll recess until 2:20.

The committee recessed from 1403 to 1512.

PAUL MYLEMANS

The Chair: I understand that Mr Mylemans has arrived. We appreciate you being early, sir. We have been waiting for someone to come. The floor is yours.

Mr Paul Mylemans: Dear Chairman and members, I am Paul Mylemans. With my family I live at 139 Simcoe Crescent in Komoka, which is in Lobo township, Middlesex county.

I wish to make my views and observations in regard to Bill 81. As I understand this bill, in part it is the intent that the new provincial electoral district boundaries be the same as the federal boundaries. Notwithstanding that the federal boundaries are already in place and force for the next federal election, I believe the new provincial boundaries should be established to be fair and reasonable to all the resident constituents. With the short notice of the upcoming hearings, and not sufficiently familiar with the pros and cons of the reduction in members of the Legislative Assembly, I will not address that issue at this time. I will, however, address the proposed boundaries, especially as they affect my municipality, my community and my family.

As I understand it, the proposed new electoral district boundaries for Lobo township will be part of Perth-Middlesex. This stretches for about 120 kilometres from the Thames River at the southwesterly boundary of the city of London towards the north and east into Perth county. By far, most of this area has no association with us in south Lobo and one would have to drive through the city of London to visit there. Political association and representation in my community have very little in common with those in north Perth.

I live in Lobo township, in the village of Komoka. Our municipality abuts the city of London at its west-southwest side. Our shopping, our socializing, our sports activities, our workplace, our schooling, our interests, our community and neighbourhood are in Lobo, Caradoc, Delaware townships and the city of London and St Thomas area. We're just minutes from these.

The proposal for Perth-Middlesex ignores existing entities. It is proposed that the county of Middlesex be split into three separate districts, which is in addition to the three separate districts in the city of London. We in the rural part of Middlesex have more in common with our city neighbours than we do with the area of Perth that is much closer to Kitchener-Waterloo. Parts of the proposed electoral district are closer to the city of Toronto than to us.

At the encouragement of the provincial government, the restructuring of municipalities will conclude by combining several existing municipalities. One of the most sensible restructuring proposals is combining Lobo,

in whole or in part, with Caradoc and Delaware townships. This was recommended in the county of Middlesex and tritownship studies and has been actively and publicly discussed and presented. The new boundaries being proposed would then split this new municipality into three separate electoral districts. One would go south to the Elgin-St Thomas area, the second would go west to the Lambton-Sarnia area and the third north into Perth, Stratford, Listowel, Palmerston. For a combined population of about 14,000 in this new municipality, this is not sensible. These restructuring studies recognize a common interest among the residents of this area. The electoral boundaries would do well to also recognize this.

If there is a need to have four, or any other number of, electoral districts in the greater London area, a simple redrawing of boundaries could be by selecting the centre point of this area, for example, the corner of Dundas and Wellington streets in London, right here where we are now, and then draw a straight line north and south, and another east and west, thus creating four equally populated electoral districts, and each consisting of urban, rural and rural-urban residents.

Surely, as representatives of provincial affairs for all Ontario citizens, the members of the Legislature do not require to have separate representatives for city urban areas and others for rural or rural-urban areas. Provincial affairs and issues in Ontario affect all its citizens and should have regard for all of them. On the other hand, local government serves the local communities and their needs; therefore, separate representatives are needed at that level of government. Everyone should have accessible and fair political representation.

As activists in political activity, you and your members are certainly aware of the work, time, effort and volunteering that make our democracy work. The distances involved to associate with others and travel throughout the electoral district should not be left as remnants after other areas have been defined. The cost of political activity will be considerably more for those of us isolated from our other neighbours, be it for a candidate, a volunteer in our riding association, running an election campaign and just contacting other constituents about a common cause.

The proposal for Perth-Middlesex would certainly impose additional cost to those of us in south Lobo, such as long-distance charges, travelling and additional time. For those of us in south Lobo, where we can see the city of London about 100 yards across the river, the proposed electoral boundaries need to be amended. A quick look at a road map will confirm this. Let's use common sense.

Mr Martin: I found your presentation to be quite good in that you paint for us a picture of the very complicated issue this really is. It's not as simple as saying, "Okay, the federal commission came out and decided that this is what it's going to do, so we should follow suit and, bang, impose the template," because it doesn't work, from your perspective. It doesn't work in some very practical ways. I guess it speaks to the issue that I've been raising for the last couple of days as I've sat on this committee, which is the process through which we go to establish the right way to allow people access to the decision-making body of this province, how we do that.

1520

I suggest to you that what the government has laid out at this point, by way of its intention which we're told here quite often is in the Common Sense Revolution, is what they're going to do. What we're trying to do with the help of folks like yourself is challenge them to step back a bit and be respectful of the process we've followed for quite a while now in the province which is that after each census is taken and the publication of figures, the province establishes a commission to report to the Legislature. The relationship develops there and eventually we get to a point where, if changes need to be made, they're made in consultation with folks like yourself so that we don't end up with situations such as you described.

That happened in Ontario on a number of different occasions — 1962, 1973 and as early as 1983 — where terms of reference charged the commission to submit a proposal for consideration by public hearings. These were held across the province, and some things that came out of that consistent with other commissions were, for example, that the north would continue to be guaranteed 15 seats and that we would continue to look at things like diversity of interests, means of communication, topographical features, existing boundaries in municipalities and some of the things you've mentioned.

We're having a hard time challenging the government to revert back to this process. Do you have anything to say — you described the problem re the process — and any recommendations to us in that respect?

Mr Mylemans: I don't have any solutions. I know that the federal boundaries are there for us to use for a number of years. Personally I'm disappointed that they're there, that the opportunity wasn't there to have those changed, but we now have the opportunity for the provincial boundaries that, as they're proposed, for the issues I've presented, certainly need to be amended. Whatever process that involves, however that is to be done, I don't have those answers at this time.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): Thanks very much for your presentation. Did you make a donation to the commission that came looking at the federal boundaries in 1994?

Mr Mylemans: Unfortunately I missed that. As I remember to some extent, hearings were started a number of years ago and then, perhaps through public pressure, they were stalled or delayed. I guess in not noticing it, whatever the consequence, as we just about didn't notice this particular notice of hearing, it to some extent slipped by us. At least that's my impression. That's why I said we have to live with that. If we had the opportunity I'd certainly make a presentation, as I had intended to do at that time, but not in a formal sense.

Mrs Ross: The reason I asked is because I'm reading some information here that says Perth-Middlesex replaces the commission's proposed Perth-Oxford-Middlesex. So they heard delegations come forward who said they didn't like those three communities being involved in that one electoral district. Because of the presentations made they took Oxford out of the equation, from what I'm reading here, so that "Perth-Middlesex," it says, "remains very large, but it does cross only one county boundary and it

would seem to satisfy the strong representations from Perth county that it be kept together." Can you comment on that and help me understand?

Mr Mylemans: I can't from the perspective of Perth county. As I understand, having looked at the map, Perth county remains intact and it's Middlesex that we can identify to ourselves that appears to be remnants of everything else having to be resolved, where we have an area where we live, immediately to the west of London, apparently in a riding that's going to stretch to the east and north. It just doesn't make sense for people residing in those areas to have things in common, whether it be through the representative — granted, all people who would let their name stand are worthy and would try to do the best job for their constituents. There are a number of areas where you have common concerns with your neighbours in your own local areas that may be completely different from an area that, as I said, is closer to the city of Toronto than it is to us here, where the interest of those communities would be more apt to be Kitchener-Waterloo as their urban centre or perhaps even Metropolitan Toronto.

Mrs Ross: Would you say it's fair to say that an MPP can represent residents from varying circumstances, for example farm communities and city communities? They have different interests, but a representative can familiarize himself with both their interests. Wouldn't you agree?

Mr Mylemans: In the example I expressed in here, and that may be simplistic, that's sort of a suggestion I've had. I believe they can, by and large. The provincial issues are much more the same for urban and residential, or they should be, where the local government zeroes in more on local needs, and therefore separate urban centres and separate rural government are probably more important. But provincially as well, as perhaps more so, federally the same services should be provided for everyone regardless of where they live or what they do.

Mr Sergio: Thank you very much for coming down and making a presentation to us on a Saturday afternoon. By the way, how did you get to know about the hearings?

Mr Mylemans: The ad in the London Free Press on Tuesday.

Mr Sergio: You managed to get that, eh? Good. So, being a Saturday afternoon, the Santa Claus parade didn't deter you.

Mr Mylemans: I didn't think I would be here today, that there would be enough time, so I submitted the letter quickly, an overnight affair. I just had a chance to improve upon that a little bit in my verbal presentation. But it was just a chance notice. As was mentioned earlier, that chance was missed a year or two ago.

Mr Sergio: So if perchance you had gone shopping and you missed reading the paper, you would have missed the chance today.

Mr Mylemans: That's correct.

Mr Sergio: Sir, part of the reason for this bill is that it is based on some savings the government thinks we are going to acquire by making some changes. The other one is that we will get better representation with fewer representatives. Based on that, do you feel we should have the same resources as federal members so that we can serve equally and effectively the same constituents?

Mr Mylemans: As far as resources, again I'm not familiar enough to respond to that. In the area of representation there certainly would be a benefit to having those same areas, I can concur with that, not with the boundaries being proposed, at least the one that affects my family. I assume that other areas would be affected the same way, in my view not affected fairly. By and large, constituents may well be properly served by having the same boundaries. I'm not familiar enough to address that issue thoroughly.

1530

Mr Sergio: Sometimes when I go to church or drop in at one of the coffee bars in my area to say hello to some of the people, whatever, they say, "I got another letter from Mr Marchi," who happens to be the MP for my area, about whatever topic could be under discussion, "I got another one and I got this and I got that," and I get them because I'm in the same constituency, once a month, perhaps twice a month, on different issues. They wonder why they couldn't get the same thing from me with respect to important issues without being political, regardless of who is in power. They say: "This is an important issue. How can I get information? Why didn't you advise me on VLTs? Why didn't you let me know about this and about that?" But we don't have the resources. We don't have the same amount of money those members have, let alone benefits. We don't have the same resources. We don't have the same staffing. Do you think we should have another two people, another person? How do you feel with respect to that?

Mr Mylemans: I'm not endorsing the Who Does What committee and its conclusions —

Mr Sergio: That's another story, yes.

Mr Mylemans: — but there certainly is some benefit and some sense to distributing responsibilities and making that clear to the public. If that carries forward to political representation, if that's proven to be good, that's fine. I see no problems with that. As far as having sufficient resources, I suppose that is within the budget allocations of the federal and provincial governments. A smaller number of politicians in the provincial arena, as is being proposed, may well be good — it certainly fits in with a lot of other cutbacks — but again, whether that properly serves the needs I can't answer.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Mylemans. We do appreciate your input here this afternoon. Our next presenter is Dave Winninger.

Mrs Pupatello: Just as we're waiting for the next presenter, we have had a letter submitted to us by a couple of individuals who couldn't make it today. It's very brief, if I could read it into the record. This is being addressed to:

"The Honourable D. Johnson

"Chairman of Management Board

"Re: Boundary hearings on Bill 81 in London

"We understand that we are scheduled to appear today to speak on the issue of the new electoral boundaries some time after 2 today. While we appreciate the opportunity to speak at the hearing in London, our schedules do not allow us to make a presentation. We would encourage you to give more preparation time to those people who wish to make presentations to you on this

matter. It is an issue important to the public, and due consideration should be given to hearing from more people across the province.

"The hearing process appears flawed in not allowing enough time for broad public consultation. One cannot always think and respond in sound bites. Time for more careful study would allow a more reflective and representative response from the public.

"Yours truly,

"Tom Donnelly and Larry Crossan."

The Chair: Just to add to that, those gentlemen asked if Megan Walker could make a presentation on their behalf. As the Chair of the committee I agreed to that, and she wasn't able to show up.

DAVID WINNINGER

The Chair: Mr Winner, you have 20 minutes. The floor is yours.

Mr David Winner: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity of presenting today. I commend the members for sitting on a Saturday to afford people who might not ordinarily be able to attend these committee hearings to make an appearance today. I'm pleased to see at least one of our local members from the NDP here as well.

As a former MPP for London South, my attention was certainly caught by the proposed changes to the riding boundaries in the London area. I immediately realized that shifting the axis from north-south to east-west would fail to recognize many of the communities of interest that I've grown to perceive are shared in south London but are not shared with north London. I further question the value of combining rural with urban areas which certainly have a divergence of interest.

I'm also aware that London is growing quickly. The population of London following annexation was approximately 316,000 people. When I drove into London this week the sign said the population was now 326,000 people. Thus, London has experienced growth roughly the population of St Thomas over the last couple of years. With fewer politicians representing the constituents, I have serious doubts that their needs will be addressed.

Residents of south London have interests in common that are not necessarily shared by residents of north London. One outstanding example that I encountered as an MPP was the crying need for an aquatic facility in south London. While London North has the expensive indoor state-of-the-art London Aquatic Centre, London South has no indoor swimming facility, let alone an outdoor one.

White Oaks, a sprawling suburb in south London, comprises the largest single geographical area in the riding of London South. The residents rolled up their sleeves and went to work to raise funds to build an indoor swimming facility. At the same time, the elementary school in White Oaks was woefully overcrowded, and grade 7 and 8 students had to be bused out of their neighbourhoods to other schools in the city.

The creative idea of a multi-use facility combining a new elementary school and indoor swimming pool was hatched and circulated and gained approval. Funding for the new school was finally approved by the Ministry of

Education and Training and the federal-provincial infrastructure program offered a unique opportunity for funding of an aquatic centre to serve all the people of south London. Private fund-raising began. To raise money, I was submerged in a dunk tank more times than I care to remember, along with the local school principal both of us extremely popular targets for the baseballs people paid to throw to raise money for the new facility. I also ran a hot dog stand on Canada Day to raise money for the new facility. The manager of a local Zehrs Market offered to contribute a percentage of food sale receipts for this important project, and a private initiative to raise \$400,000 was launched.

That new school and that new swimming facility would have been a reality today — the sod had been turned — had it not been for the Conservative government freezing the funding for the new school, bringing the entire project to an immediate halt. What opportunity will there be in the future, with the riding boundaries reconfigured along north-south boundaries or east-west boundaries, for the residents of south London to come together again to see this project to fruition? I seriously doubt the residents of north London, who already enjoy a fine aquatic facility, would lobby for funding a similar facility in south London.

What about the accessibility of local members to their constituents? London South used to be one of the most populous ridings in the province until boundary changes in 1987 which transferred residents of the area of Old South to the riding of London Centre. Following this change, London South still had more voters than any other riding in southwestern Ontario. Fortunately, it takes only 15 minutes to drive from one end of the riding to the other. I do not envy those members in northern ridings who have to drive all day to events in their ridings. I know from personal experience travelling in the north that some members can access some of their communities only by plane, sometimes landing on pontoons or skis. Larger ridings will make the task of adequately representing constituents even more geographically challenging than it is today.

However, urban ridings like London South present their own difficulties. Federal members spend much of their constituency time dealing with issues related to Canada pension, employment insurance and immigration. These are the matters they are likely contacted on because frequently, as provincial members, we receive inquiries and we pass them on. Provincial members, however, deal with far more issues than their federal counterparts, including family support, social assistance, day care, housing, OSAP for students at colleges and universities, birth certificates and other registrations, workers' compensation, environmental concerns, jobs and economic development, cultural facilities, drivers' licences, roads and sewers. The list seems endless.

For the sake of saving the taxpayers a few dollars so that money can be placed in the pockets of wealthy people who will benefit from tax cuts, why would the public want their politicians to be less accessible than they are now?

Just the first issue of delivering family support to recipients seems to challenge this government beyond

measure. I'm a lawyer in private practice now, and I receive many calls. Admittedly, some of these calls come from people who may not realize there was an election 17 months ago and they have a new member. Many of these calls come from single mothers struggling to feed, clothe and house their children with child and spousal support the government is supposed to collect and pay in a timely fashion to these people. Suddenly, after closing eight regional offices, including the London office, these people are not receiving family support. What do you say to someone, as we count down the days to Christmas, who hasn't had money for two or three months to pay rent, buy clothes for their children returning to school or properly feed those children? For those of you who read the local paper, you'll also know that many people have had their hydro and sometimes heat cut off for failure to have their family support remitted to them.

Perhaps you can blame working mothers for the fact that children are going to school hungry, as Mike Harris seems to have done, or you can bring criminal proceedings against honest, hardworking members of the NDP opposition who are seeking to find out the real reasons for the holdup in family support payments.

These days there are countless complaints about the Mike Harris government. The government has failed to create the 700,000 new jobs it promised. Instead, people are laid off in droves. Government has cut employment by the thousands. Teachers and nurses in the wider public sector are laid off to finance the Harris tax cut. In the private sector, downsizing continues apace, while banks and other corporations make tremendous profits.

The Harris government has tried to strip workers of their bargaining rights and allowed scab labour to replace them when they go on strike. Employment equity is gone and pay equity rolled back. With cuts to health care, there will be longer waiting lists for surgery unless you can afford to go to the US, and seniors and poor people will have to pay prescription charges for their drugs.

1540

As a direct result of education cuts, classroom sizes are up, schools have fewer amenities, and teachers, like many other workers, are under stress. Those without jobs are struggling with lower social assistance and less access to day care when they want to go out and find jobs. No new social housing is funded by this government, so more and more people will be poorly housed.

With fewer politicians, who will those people be able to complain to, or does this government really care if the people have a voice in between elections?

My conclusion is the following. The government ought to reconsider its position in the matter of riding boundaries. You shouldn't simply rubber-stamp proposed federal riding boundaries as suitable and appropriate for provincial boundaries. This will inevitably ignore communities of interest which have developed over the years. Further, local members will be representing more constituents, both rural and urban, with the same staff and resources. The consequences are obvious. There will be less effective representation. Those requiring access to their provincial politicians will soon be aware of what they have lost.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We've got about three minutes per caucus for questions, beginning with the government.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you very much for your presentation. First of all, the previous presenter mentioned that the type of people or the type of constituency one represents is not as important as the fact that they are one community of interest. Whether they're rural or urban is not as important as the fact that you are part of one community. Your presentation seems to suggest that that's not the case, that it even matters which end of the city one represents. Are those two contradictory positions that were put forward?

Mr Winninger: I think I might differ from the previous speaker in that regard. I was told that under the existing boundaries there's perhaps one farm in the riding of London South. I've yet to find it. But that's how little I know about the farming community around London. I know they probably have horses and cows, and that's about it. I spent a day on a farm with the parliamentary exchange program and I learned a lot more about dairy farming at a farm near Hensall, Ontario. If I were the local member, as a practising urban lawyer I wouldn't feel well qualified to speak to the needs of rural residents.

Mr Hardeman: I want to commend you for the hard work in raising money for a community centre. I think that's somewhat indicative of what happens in a lot of rural Ontario, where people do go out and raise money for community projects like that. I want to commend you for that. But I am curious as to the position you take that had that been a riding in the other way, the member would not have been as generous with his time and efforts because they were representing a riding that was north-south as opposed to east-west. There would still be that same need in the community. Why would you assume that because they were not in your community in the same way, you would not have done that?

Mr Winninger: I think there would be a few difficulties inherent in that. First of all, under the infrastructure program, which would have funded part of the cost, you have to show a pressing need and a fairly widespread need, as you'd know, for a particular community facility. If you hive off the ridings as you appear to be doing with the boundary changes, instead of having a whole area which comprises London South at present and about 100,000 people who don't have a swimming facility, indoor or outdoor, really, to speak of — you bring together that collectivity and that's where you get the impetus. But with the reconfigured boundaries, you'd have London North already having its own superb aquatic facility and part of London South having none at all.

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks so much for your presentation this afternoon.

Having been a member in the House at Queen's Park yourself, maybe I could ask for your comments on the information that we do know in terms of the estimates of the Premier's expenditures for his office increasing by almost an additional \$1 million next year, up from \$1.8 million to over \$2.7 million, and how that indicates that change in the balance of power where you have a decrease in the actual elected members and the cost

savings there, and if you compare the numbers in this year alone, 10% of that savings is being spent additionally in the Premier's office. So where you have significant savings on one side by cutting the number of MPPs, you see the Premier's office going up by almost \$1 million, from \$1.8 million to \$2.7 million. You can see where the balance of power is going, which indicates to me that the executive branch of government is really where the concentration of power has gone, is going and will continue to go.

Maybe you can speak to that, having been in the House as a member, and how you see the effect on the impact that a representative who is duly elected can have on governmental process and where this will lead us.

Mr Winninger: If your figures are correct, I'm not surprised, and I find it entirely unconscionable not only that the access to local politicians would be reduced while expenditures are increasing in the Premier's office, but at the same time we're finding tremendous cuts in social services for the people who can afford it the least. I would find it entirely unconscionable if the Premier's budget were increased, with cuts at the lower end. But it wouldn't surprise me, because right now I think there's an agenda, and that agenda doesn't seem to change. It doesn't matter whether the local voters call their government MPPs, because the government MPPs are sort of throwing up their hands and saying: "Well, you know, I can't do a lot about it. I'm not happy with it either." It's like some kind of juggernaut that's going to go on inexorably and despite the best efforts of the people out there to influence government decision-making. So if an increase in the Premier's budget allows them to pursue that course better, it wouldn't surprise me that they'd be devoting more funds to pushing that right-wing agenda.

Mrs Boyd: Thank you for coming, David, and for being willing to give your vision on this. This issue of a shift in power from elected members to the non-elected branch has concerned a few people. You'll be interested to know that the London-Middlesex Taxpayers' Coalition was not all that hot on this proposal because they were worried about that; they were very worried about the concentration of power in one area. So I don't think it's just a figment of people's imagination.

Does it really matter how many politicians there are if the democratic process is there? As a former member, as

somebody who has experienced this and as someone who has been active in the community, why does it matter around the numbers of politicians and the configuration of boundaries? What makes the difference?

Mr Winninger: I think that's an important question. I sort of separate the legislative duties of a member at Queen's Park, and surely it would be frustrating if there's no democracy that can be exercised there, but I'm thinking of all those needy people out there in the community right now whose needs have never been greater for housing and social assistance and all of the necessities of life that the people around this table probably enjoy. I'm thinking to myself, what kind of voice do they have in this process and how are they going to be able to access their local member? Are they going to join a waiting list if the population of each riding in the London area increases by a third? I imagine it would if you eliminate one out of four ridings, and I don't see that as a positive step for this government to be taking not only in the London area but anywhere in the province at the present time.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds, Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: The process: We have had various views on all kinds of subjects here re this whole question. The process, the short time line, what's your response to that?

Mr Winninger: I apologize for not having a better prepared presentation, but like other people, I found out about it probably a week before. I consider myself fortunate to have standing here today, and I thank the clerk of the committee for the opportunity to appear.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Winninger. We do appreciate your input this afternoon.

Just a couple of housekeeping things before we adjourn. There will be cabs at the front door for anybody going to the airport at 4:45.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank all the presenters who took some time to be with us today. We appreciate your input. I especially want to thank all of those from this morning who, despite the location of the Santa Claus parade all arrived on time or early. Thank you very much.

We are adjourned until Thursday, November 21, in Dryden.

The committee adjourned at 1551.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Mr Len	Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
Mr Terence H.	Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mrs Marion	Boyd (London Centre / -Centre ND) for Mr Wood
Mr Steve	Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr Tony	Martin (Sault Ste Marie ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr Bruce	Smith (Middlesex PC) for Mr Tascona

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Bob	Wood (London South / -Sud PC)
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Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Avrum Fenson, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 21 November 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 21 novembre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 réduisant
le nombre de députés



Chair: Jack Carroll
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 21 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 21 novembre 1996

The committee met at 0900 in the Best Western Motor Inn, Dryden.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Acting Chair (Mr John Hastings): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, members of the public. We'll get this session of the standing committee on general government going. We have our first deputation here. Before we proceed, Mr Miclash would like to say a few words of introduction.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I would just like to welcome all the committee members and the people from Toronto to Dryden. I know that for a good number of people who are here today, it's their first trip to Dryden. I hope it's an enjoyable one and wish you all the very best in your stay in Kenora riding. Again, thanks for coming to Dryden, and we look forward to the hearings.

ROBERT DAVIDSON

The Acting Chair: Mr Davidson, would you please identify yourself for the record. You have about 20 minutes. If you want to take up all that time, fine, or if you want to be more brief and allow for questions, we're at your disposal — however you want to use the time.

Mr Robert Davidson: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Before I begin my presentation, I'd like to thank the members of the riding and the association for allowing me to make this presentation here this morning.

The last 10 years have been tumultuous, challenging, invigorating and marked by change. Restructuring is happening across the province in most areas of the public and private sectors. Currently the public sector must deal with the challenge of an unprecedented deficit reduction initiative. Bill 81 has determined a reduction of some 27 members of provincial Parliament across Ontario, reflecting savings of several million dollars and a shift to greater empowerment for municipal governments.

Our strength for the most part comes from NOMA, FONOM, and ultimately AMO, who bring our concerns to the provincial government and assist us in many ways to understand the position of our government.

Recently, Northern Development and Mines Minister Chris Hodgson assured us that we would be treated fairly. Our direct contact to the minister's office and our northern representative, Bill Murdoch, are most encouraging when our concerns require immediate attention.

In summary, when change is all about us, cost-management efficiencies are the order of the day, not only by the province but also the day-to-day operations of our communities. Therefore, in my view, Bill 81 does seek out additional efficiencies for Ontario taxpayers and should be considered a positive indicator for our province.

I take this opportunity, ladies and gentlemen, to commend our provincial government for its courage to care and once again give some meaning to the word "Ontario."

The Acting Chair: We have about 15 minutes, so we divide it with five minutes each for each caucus, starting with the Liberals.

Mr Miclash: Thank you very much for your presentation, Reeve Davidson. You mentioned Bill Murdoch's name. Bill is the northern development parliamentary assistant, the parliamentary assistant to Chris Hodgson, and he has indicated that he will be voting against this legislation. Were you aware of that?

Mr Davidson: He will be voting against this legislation?

Mr Miclash: Yes. He has indicated that on the public record.

Mr Davidson: I wasn't aware of that.

Mr Miclash: Well, he certainly has. He was one of the authors of the document A Voice for the North. He and a number of members travelled the area before the last provincial election, and in that document they indicated that the north needed more representation, not less. He was very clear on that and very clear in that document. This was the document A Voice for the North, authorized by the now Premier during the past campaign, in which they were selling the fact that northerners needed more of a voice at Queen's Park. Were you not aware of the document A Voice for the North, copublished by Bill Murdoch, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines?

Mr Davidson: Not that specific document, Mr Miclash. I can't say as I'm totally familiar with it.

Mr Miclash: What I'm saying is that what we were getting here in northern Ontario was A Voice for the North, a document being sold to northerners, but that's not exactly what the entire province was getting. For you

to make comments such as this, saying that Bill Murdoch is effectively representing you when he tells us that he does not support this legislation — I'm confused.

Mr Davidson: I'm not sure what he tells you, Mr Miclash, but I know Mr Murdoch personally and he takes our concerns to the province in a proficient and timely manner.

Mr Miclash: Reeve, I'm confused. You don't have a concern about this, yet Mr Murdoch has said he's going to vote against this legislation. Is he effectively representing your views at Queen's Park?

Mr Davidson: I expect he would be.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): One of the concerns northern people might have — to be clear about this legislation, the province is reducing the number of provincial ridings by about 20%. In northwestern Ontario, the province is reducing the number of constituencies by 40%. You have no concerns that the influence of northern people, not just in this government but in any government which may follow this government, will be diminished? You think that won't affect northern people and their representation, to lose 20% more of their constituencies than the rest of the province?

Mr Davidson: I don't think it will have a tremendous effect. In these days of restructuring, as you're probably well aware or should be, the efficiencies we're looking at across the province are absolutely necessary. If I didn't believe that — I may not be in favour of this bill, but as a result of that restructuring process and the massive deficit we've incurred in the last number of years, we have to do something and we have to do it very quickly.

Mr Michael Brown: No one is suggesting that restructuring is not a good idea. No one is suggesting that the world remains identical to what it was a year ago, even. What we are suggesting is that in the federal experience, when they looked at how the boundaries of Canada would be redrawn — and that's an important point: the boundaries of Canada, that there would be adequate representation for all areas of Canada. In the mix in Canada, we don't fare badly in northern Ontario.

You have to understand that places like Prince Edward Island have four MPs in Canada for what is essentially one seat anywhere else in Canada. The same applies to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. So rural northern areas in Canada, in the Canadian context, are represented quite well. In the context of Ontario, we are losing a dramatic amount of representation. Do you think that makes sense? Why didn't the province of Ontario have an electoral commission to do this?

Mr Davidson: I guess the other thing you have to reflect on, Mr Brown, is the fact that bringing these provincial riding boundaries in line with the federal should also show some efficiencies at election time: polling stations and so on.

Mr Michael Brown: If that's the argument, the obvious thing to do is to hold provincial and federal and municipal elections on the same day. Do like the Americans do: Elect your dogcatcher on the same day you're electing the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Ontario. I find that argument to be less than convincing. Would you be in favour of having municipal, provincial, federal and dogcatcher elections on the same day?

Mr Davidson: When you talk about the area of the north, we have a lot of vast area up here, covered with a lot of lakes and forests and so on. I'm wondering if the per capita representation of ridings in the north is equal to those in the south.

Mr Michael Brown: You would be pleased —

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Brown. Mr Wood?

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you, Mr Hastings. You've been most generous.

0910

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thank you for your presentation. I can see through this that you're putting a lot of respect for Chris Hodgson and Bill Murdoch in, saying they will represent the north when there are five fewer representatives for northern Ontario. Over the last 16 months, from what I can see, and I'm the parliamentary critic for northern development and mines and tourism, I haven't seen any interest or any want on their behalf to represent northern Ontario at the Premier's level. All we've seen is an attack on transportation, an attack on the amount of money being spent on roads, the amount of transfers going to municipalities. They should be speaking out for northern Ontario, saying, "Well, 80% of the land mass of the province is within northern Ontario," yet they're not speaking out as a voice for northern Ontario, from what I've been able to gather, since 1995 when they were elected. I just wondered if you wanted to comment on that.

Mr Davidson: Very briefly, Mr Wood, we're talking about efficiencies in Ontario. Many times I think that focus gets lost in other political debate. I've listened to the House with a fair bit of interest in the last number of months. It's efficiencies we're talking about. If you want to believe this province doesn't have a massive deficit that needs to be dealt with, maybe you're right, but I don't share that view with you. I think we've got a problem and I think it has to be moved along rather quickly to get this province back on track. I don't think you can argue that, can you?

Mr Len Wood: The debt and deficit were there in —

Mr Davidson: Can you argue that?

Mr Len Wood: I'm not arguing that the debt and deficit don't have to be brought under control, but why should northern Ontario —

Mr Davidson: Is it real?

Mr Len Wood: Why should northern Ontario pay the full price?

Mr Davidson: Is that deficit real?

Mr Len Wood: In 1992, there was —

Mr Davidson: I asked you, is that deficit real?

Mr Len Wood: Sure, the debt is real.

Mr Davidson: Then we have to deal with it.

Mr Len Wood: We've seen that over the last 50 years, the Conservative government borrowed each and every year \$42 billion before they left office in 1985. The Liberals borrowed each and every year and the NDP borrowed each and every year. But that \$50 billion or \$60 billion of debt, accumulating up to \$100 billion, can't be paid back on the backs of northern Ontarians, as far as I'm concerned.

I'll just give you a statement. In 1992 the Harris Conservatives, at that time, when they were the third

party, brought forward a private member's resolution proposing to limit the geographic areas of constituencies in Ontario to reflect the varying conditions and circumstances and requirements regarding representation as between rural and urban electoral districts. That particular resolution passed. If you go back to 1983, when there was a Conservative government, they were saying at that time that northern Ontario should be respected with a minimum of 15 seats in northern Ontario, and I'm just wondering what has changed so drastically.

If you're looking at eliminating five provincial members of Parliament, you're talking about \$2.3 million in actual wages lost. At the same time, the present government is going to go out and borrow \$22 billion and add to the debt so they can give the wealthiest people in Ontario a tax break. I'm just wondering where the common sense is in all of this spend, spend, spend, at the same time as northern Ontario is going to lose representation.

Mr Davidson: It may not be easy, Mr Wood, to grapple with those questions. You either have to believe it or you don't. I happen to believe there's a deficit.

Mr Len Wood: We all believe there's a deficit.

Mr Davidson: I think Ontario is in trouble, and we're going to come out of it, but I think we have to get on with it and somehow get away from this backbiting and internal fighting among parties. I don't like to hear that when I see it on the television. It gives me a lot of concern because it cuts into a lot of progress. I think we need progress, not opposition to sound, well-thought-out ideas.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): I think we should correct the record. The NDP is having major trouble with the numbers again. We did not borrow \$42 billion every year. When the NDP took over from the Liberals in 1985 the debt was \$42 billion. I'm not supporting government debt — we're trying to get rid of government debt — but you have your figures wrong, Mr Wood.

Interjection.

Mr Young: Yes. That's when you took over from the Liberals. That's not what Bill Davis left this province, or Frank Miller.

Mr Michael Brown: What did Bill Davis do?

Mr Young: I want to talk to you, Mr Davidson, about representation because I'm fairly new at this job. I've been on the job 17 months. I have about 100,000 constituents, 72,000 voters, and I'm thinking how they contact me.

First of all, the number of them who contact me directly, other than running into them in the grocery store and stuff in the riding, is really only about 1% to 2%. Of that, about 80% is by telephone and about 10% is by fax and letter and then probably a little under 10% is in person. What I'm trying to understand is, what does representation mean? Does it mean that you talk to every person in person? In reality, my constituents all live within a 25-minute drive of my office, but it's a fact of modern life and modern technology that people use the telephone and they use the mail. It's also modern lifestyle. People are too busy.

I'm trying to understand the difference that the distance creates and I'm not sure it makes that much difference when you're contacting your representative by telephone, by letter or by fax. I want to ask you, in your view, isn't real representation the most important issue, the performance of the member of Parliament, that is, somebody who answers their letters, somebody who returns their phone calls, somebody who takes your personal issue to Queen's Park to go to bat for you or someone who takes northern issues, the voice of the north, to Queen's Park to go to bat for you? Isn't that the most critical part of representation?

Mr Davidson: I would have to agree with that, Mr Young. On that point, since I've been reeve of Atikokan and I'm going on my second term there now, I've not seen our member at a council meeting in six years.

Mr Young: That's a shame.

Mr Davidson: We try and reach those people, but —

Mr Michlash: Who is your rep?

Mr Davidson: The Rainy River riding, Frank, has a representative there.

Mr Michlash: Represented by?

Mr Davidson: Howard Hampton.

Mr Michlash: I just want to get that straight.

Mr Young: This is my time.

Mr Michlash: I just wanted to get that on the record.

Mr Davidson: We've got northern development and mines people working out of our community who are a direct link from the people to the government on special initiatives that residents may or may not have. The fibre optics work that's going to take place in telecommunications is going to further enhance the less need for politicians across the province, and I think we should all get behind that initiative and look at it as a positive thing, as a cost saver. If somehow that money could be diverted over to the health care side of things, that would be a tremendous step forward for all of us.

Mr Len Wood: It's more for tax breaks for the wealthy.

Mr Davidson: Yes, but how do we know that? I didn't see anything in writing that tells me that, Mr Wood.

Mr Len Wood: It was in the last budget.

The Acting Chair: Mr Wood, please. Mr Young has the floor.

Mr Young: Steve, do you have question?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Thank you.

The Acting Chair: One minute, Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll be very brief. I just wanted to highlight something and get your feedback. One of the things that this bill does is undo at least a decade of failure to recognize the shifting population across the province. It really has to be put on the record that the part of Ontario that loses the most seats is Metro Toronto. It loses the most in absolute terms and it loses the most in terms of percentage in the House because, quite frankly, there's been greater growth in the 905 area around Toronto than within Toronto itself.

Right now, Mr Hampton — you brought up Rainy River — represents 19,000 voters; Mr Palladini represents 129,000. Do you think it's fair that one member would have six and a quarter times the workload of another member, and do you think that would more than offset

whatever geographical realities face Mr Hampton up here?

Mr Davidson: That's a valid statement, Mr Gilchrist, and that was the point I was trying to make to Mr Wood here, that those numbers are certainly not equitable when you compare them and that there is a need to address that. I think the people of Ontario are very pleased with that move that the province is doing, looking at it as another efficiency that needs to be done.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Davidson, for coming in today and appearing before the committee. We appreciate your comments.

0920

WILLIAM SALONEN

The Acting Chair: Would our next deputant come up, the mayor of Dryden, Mr Salonen. Welcome, Mayor Salonen.

Mr William Salonen: Good morning and welcome to Dryden. I'm very happy that this committee has come to northwestern Ontario to hear our point of view. I don't like the idea of giving out my brief. It's not a good teaching technique to give you material because maybe you won't pay attention, you'll be reading or shuffling, but since the young lady asked for it, I gave it to you.

In my past life, I was a teacher. Just to update you, I'm now starting my last year of my second term as mayor of Dryden and, prior to that, I was a councillor for eight years.

As you know, northern Ontario has only a very small voice in the Who Does What panel and on its panels. In fact, I don't believe we have any elected officials at all giving input into the Who Does What process.

This fact is very obvious when one reads the recommendations from the Who Does What committee on the issue of educational reform. This panel "recommended that the number of school boards be substantially reduced to be consistent with regional and county boundaries." Here in northwestern Ontario we do not have regional government; nor do we have counties. We are wondering where we fit in this recommendation.

Therefore, I am very pleased to see the committee here in Dryden this morning. You will have the opportunity to hear from Ontarians from the northwestern part of this great province and to get our views at first hand.

I will say at the outset that I am not in favour of reducing the number of ridings in northern Ontario. I will base my short presentation on three words — and from hearing Mr Davidson I wish my presentation was longer. There'd be less time for questions. I repeat, I will base my short presentation on three words: "consideration," "land mass" and "geography."

The proponents of the redistribution legislation want the ridings to be based on population. In a large province, such as ours, I feel other considerations must be taken into account. I would like to present to this committee a comparison of two ridings to accent my point.

Let us take the proposed riding of Kenora-Rainy River and compare it to the riding of Don Valley East, which is a mid-Toronto riding. The population of the Kenora-Rainy River riding would be some 75,000 while the Don

Valley East riding is 107,421. On the surface, one representative for each of these groups of people seems fair. But let us take into consideration land mass and geography.

In the Don Valley East riding, one could drive from the east boundary to the west boundary in 10 minutes, from the north boundary to the south boundary in 10 minutes, and I would think that it would not take much longer than 10 minutes to get to Queen's Park from anywhere in the riding.

Now let us look at the Kenora-Rainy River riding. From the east boundary to the west boundary is 500 kilometres, at least a five-hour drive. From the southern boundary to the northern boundary is 920 kilometres. You can't drive it. There are no roads to many of the northern reserves. A car and a plane trip is many hours, depending on where one would begin the air portion of the journey: Red Lake, Sioux Lookout or Pickle Lake. The representative also has the travel from Queen's Park to the airport before three hours of air travel to get to the riding.

If Ontarians are to be treated fairly, the factors of land mass and geography must be taken into consideration.

It is my belief that much of the interaction that an MPP has is with local governing bodies. In the Don Valley East riding, the MPP has one mayor, one council and one bureaucracy to interact with. A Kenora-Rainy River riding MPP would have 26 mayors or reeves, 26 councils, 26 bureaucracies and 50 chiefs and 50 band councils as well as numerous local roads boards to liaise with. Due consideration should be given to this fact.

Other governing bodies in Canada have given consideration to geography. I point to the majority of the national curling championships. Each province and territory, along with a team from northern Ontario, compete at a majority of the major events.

The Canadian Hockey Association, whose headquarters are in Ottawa, recognizes a branch from each province except for Ontario. In Ontario there are three branches: the Ontario Hockey Association, the Ottawa District Amateur Hockey Association and the Thunder Bay Amateur Hockey Association. The Thunder Bay Amateur Hockey Association boundaries include the area we know as northwestern Ontario, and we are given the same rules, regulations and respect as every province in Canada.

My point is that representation by population does not always make sense, and I believe these governing bodies have taken other factors into consideration.

Another example, which I heard earlier this morning, is Prince Edward Island, with some 94,000 electors. They have four federal ridings and 26 provincial ridings. If representation by population was the criterion used for seats, where would the Prince Edward Islanders be?

In the case of northern Ontario, I truly believe that consideration to land mass and geography must be taken into consideration. Therefore, I conclude that the Kenora and Rainy River ridings should remain as separate entities.

We all understand that our fiscal House must be brought in order. Not too many months ago I saw a political cartoon that pointed at the restructuring of business and government. It was three pictures and it

only had three words. They were "downsize, rightsize, capsize." Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mayor Salonen. We have five minutes per caucus and we'll start this round with the New Democrats.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for our presentation, which is a completely different opinion from the other town that presented just prior to this.

Along the lines of your presentation, in some of the ridings in the north, 40 out of the 50 states would be smaller than some of the ridings that we have in northern Ontario. I know the Kenora-Rainy River riding is going to be huge. One of the ridings that I represent now would be enlarged to make sure that the member would have to travel about 760 kilometres from one end of the riding to the other to be able to represent the people.

I'll just go back to some of the comments I made earlier. It's kind of interesting that in 1992 the Harris Conservatives introduced a resolution asking for the limit on the geographic areas in the boundaries of Ontario during the next redistribution, and then a short time later just did a reversal of it, even though the federal redistribution is going to mean an increase of four ridings in Ontario. It's going to go from 99 to 103, whereas Mike Harris and his Conservatives are saying that they're going to reduce from 130 down to — originally it was 99, now it's 103.

You said quite clearly in your presentation that you don't think it's fair to northern Ontario. I'm just going to give you an opportunity to elaborate a little more on that if you want to, and then I'll have another question probably.

Mr Salonen: Some of those facts I did not realize. To my way of thinking, so many other factors have to be put into the equation before one can make a judgement. I tried to emphasize this morning some of the factors one must consider. One must also consider, if this riding was restructured, whoever represented the riding of Kenora-Rainy River — I sure wouldn't want that kind of job — to truly represent those people, you would hardly ever be at home. Your home life would be next to nil once you came back from Queen's Park to visit.

There are very simple things, one might think, but to the people making the request, they are important: 100th birthdays, 90th birthdays, those kind of things. If the representative is in the riding, I know the representatives here try to attend those kind of things, and to go from one end of the riding to the other and represent the people fairly would almost be an impossibility.

0930

Mr Len Wood: We heard the comment from the previous presenter that Howard Hampton did not attend council meetings. I personally represent Cochrane North right now where I have the municipalities and towns as well as reserves where the chiefs and band councillors have meetings, the town councillors have meetings.

I feel with sitting in the Legislature six months of the year or seven months of the year and being back in the riding it's physically impossible to attend very many of the town council meetings. If you do attend regularly, you're talking about 18 or 20 meetings a month that you're going to have to attend of local council meetings.

I just wonder if you have a comment on that, because representing the north, I know that it's physically impossible to attend all of these particular council meetings.

Mr Salonen: Regarding council meetings, I don't know if I would expect a representative to attend council meetings, but I know our representative does attend meetings of council, not on our council night, and we have a chit-chat.

Mr Len Wood: Yes, I do the same thing.

Mr Young: Thank you, Mayor, and thanks for letting us come to your nice city. It's the first time I've been here and I'm learning a lot more every time I come up to the north.

Mr Salonen: I wish you would have landed in Sault Ste Marie and driven up here and took a real close look.

Mr Young: Exactly, you get a real idea. That's right.

You made a comment that none of the government members have input into the Who Does What panel. I want to tell you, because I think it's very important, last spring we had a series of caucus meetings on Saturdays from 9 till 3 roughly, six-hour meetings, a series of them, where caucus members came and debated thoroughly who should do what and who would pay for what. I want you to understand that. That was as far back as the spring, and there have been numerous other opportunities to discuss those issues. So I want to assure that that is not happening.

It seems that your concerns and the power of your argument is based on the distance and the drive times between communities in the north, and yet the reeve of Atikokan has told us this morning that the current representative of Rainy River has never attended a council meeting in Atikokan. So what would change?

Mr Salonen: Maybe the representative.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): That's kind of hard to follow up on. But with that in mind, and we talk about geographic areas as well as population, I guess I'll speak to it directly and use an example. I have the largest riding in southern Ontario, I believe. It's a rural riding. It takes in two counties. The new riding would take in actually three, if I ran where I reside. You spoke about, and it has been made evident this morning, other representation as far as council meetings and that sort of thing are concerned. I think it's in the organization and how the member deals with their constituents and how they deal with their riding.

In our case, I have 34 municipalities. I meet with them twice a year on a regular basis, every one of them. They all have their chance to bring their issues. It's their agenda; it's a wide-open discussion. There are many ways to deal with large areas as far as that is concerned and allow the right feedback to come to us as MPPs so that we can take those concerns to Queen's Park. I just wonder how you'd respond to that sort of thing.

Mr Salonen: Do you have one meeting where several councils come together or do you go to each council separately?

Mr Danford: We do it in groups, because I think we as MPPs have to make the best use of our time so that we represent the overall interests of the people.

The other thing I'd like to mention — I don't know how much time I've got left — is that municipal coun-

cils, I still feel, are very accountable to the public because they're very close to the public and therefore they bring the public's interest and I think it's the best avenue for us as MPPs to take that back to Queen's Park. That's why I develop it that way. As I say, we meet regularly twice a year and then as needed, and I attend council meetings as well. I think there are ways to do this. It's in the organization of the member and how they proceed with it.

Mr Salonen: I agree there are ways to do it, except the area we're talking about is so spread out. We have these sessions with our municipal association, the Kenora district association; Rainy River district also has their meeting; and then we get together at NOMA, the North-western Ontario Municipal Association, as you understand. We have those kinds of meetings. Our representative comes to Dryden. They're not at council meetings, but we have a meeting of council with our representative. We also do that with our federal rep and I know they do it with the other organizations within the Kenora district.

It would be a lot of travelling, especially for the reserves. There are many I've never gone to. That is a real commitment. I know that much of the work with reserves is a federal responsibility but there also is provincial responsibility. If you were doing what you are doing, you would be a representative who is doing what I would think should be done in meeting with the municipalities. I agree that we're the closest to the people.

Mr Danford: I appreciate that comment.

Mr Miclash: Thank you, Mayor Salonen, for your presentation. As you were indicating, in the combination of the two ridings, it would certainly become a challenge to represent that one third of the provincial land mass, as has been indicated a good number of times. You've indicated the distance as well. I have to say that when the House leader introduced this legislation I asked him what the distance from Fort Severn to Rainy River was. I don't think he could have told me exactly that it was 700 kilometres from one corner of the riding to the other corner of the riding. You bring forth some good points in terms of both land mass and geography.

Morley Kells is a Conservative MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and I have here one of his reports from Queen's Park. We've seen these in the ridings of all the members throughout Ontario. In his report he indicates that at Queen's Park power is centralized in the office of Premier Mike Harris and very little is shared with the cabinet. During the last campaign, Mr Harris had indicated that he would "work closely with northern municipalities to forge a new and better working relationship." Have you seen that work on behalf of the Premier's office?

Mr Salonen: No.

Mr Miclash: How do you think that could be changed?

Mr Salonen: Someone from Toronto should be getting that information out, I assume. We get enough paper already, but we're a paper town, so we don't mind. Just keep it coming. It is a lot of responsibility just to read all the material and I haven't read that particular bit of literature.

Mr Miclash: So you don't feel that the Premier is actually following up on the commitment that he would work closely. I guess another commitment he made is that he would reduce the downloading on municipalities. In your view, has he done that? He indicates that he would have a working relationship that would keep northern municipalities in mind and that the downloading would be taken into consideration and reduced to municipalities. Have you seen that happen?

Mr Salonen: I haven't seen it happen yet, but all of the results of the Who Does What panel have not come out and that to me is a real concern. Everything seems to be backing up against this big dam with all this information coming in regarding policing and regarding restructuring, regarding welfare. We don't know what's going to happen and some time pretty soon it's got to be released. This dam's going to burst.

For example, we're talking restructuring around Dryden with our neighbour Barclay and with some unincorporated areas etc, and if the policing issue is settled, I think it's going to make a big difference to some of these people of how they're going to consider restructuring. It just keeps building up and building up. We hear recommendations from the Crombie committee that are going to the government and then we hear reaction to the recommendations, and we don't know what's happening. All we're getting is a lot of literature and a lot of confused information. We get the one side; we get a retraction. To me, for a municipal councillor, it's very difficult right now. I'd like to see, hopefully — we've heard by the end of November — that the government is going to let us know what's what.

Mr Young: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I wonder if we could ask Mr Miclash, because he's quoting from a document, if he would table that document for the committee.

Mr Miclash: It was a brochure during the campaign. I will certainly find that information —

Mr Young: I understand what it is. I wonder if you could table it so the rest of the committee members could look at it.

The Acting Chair: Would you consider tabling it?

Mr Miclash: He went on to say as part of the new relationship —

Mr Young: No, I'm not interested in giving you more time. I'd like to read it myself.

The Acting Chair: Mr Miclash, would you consider —

Mr Miclash: We will certainly table it, yes.

The Acting Chair: We're out of time. Thank you, Mayor Salonen, for appearing before the committee, and thank you for your witty and incisive responses as well.

Our next deputant is Mr Brunner from the Kenora Federation of Agriculture. Is he here? No.

0940

GORDON GRIFFITHS

The Acting Chair: Mr Griffiths, would you like to come to the table and make your submission? Identify yourself for the record and —

Mr Gordon Griffiths: Do I get 40 minutes, then?

The Acting Chair: I think you still get 20. You can use it however you wish for your whole submission or whatever is left we'll split up among the three caucuses.

Mr Griffiths: First of all, good morning. I'm pleased to be able to make this presentation this morning. I'm Gordon Griffiths. I ran as a candidate in the last election for the PCs and I had to address this issue to myself way back when the Common Sense Revolution came out. I'd like to make some comments as to how I analysed this myself, without even talking about party lines.

Democracy is people. People make democracy, not land mass. People have a chance to vote. We talk about majorities; it's up to people, if they want to take the opportunity to vote, to stand up and be counted. But democracy is people, not land mass, and we cannot forget that. Northern Ontario isn't different from any other place in a democratic society.

We live in a democracy up here in the north. As I was thinking about it, it's become, I think, politically popular for some of the opposition members to whine and complain about how we're treated in the north, and many people are starting to believe it. Again, I disagree. We have some differences in the north, yes we do, and it's distances between communities. We don't have the population that you have in the south, but we have a lot of similarities too. I go back again to democracy, not land mass.

A lot of the problems or difficulties, the way I see it, that we have in the north are with bureaucracy in Toronto when they are trying to make decisions on legislation and policies. It's not with representation, it's not with the MPPs; there are other difficulties.

That's where it brings up another point. Do people in the north know what they're talking about when they're talking about representation? I think that is where we have a difficulty. People are frustrated today, yes, but is it with representation or is it with service? I think there's a difference there. Representation in a democracy is by people, and with the proposed legislation we are being treated fairly in a democracy. Service is something different. When we have these difficulties that I'm speaking about with some of the bureaucrats, that's now service. Mike Harris has always spoken about service: service in government and service with the MPPs also. It's up to the MPP to make sure they have an organization in place to deal with these issues. You need staff. How many times does the MPP actually go and deal with problems in a constituency? It's a staff member who does it. We're talking about service.

I think the frustration in the north — there was a benchmark in the north set a few years ago by a fellow by the name of Leo Bernier. When I talk to people about amalgamated ridings they say, "Yes, if Leo was running there would be no problem." There's a benchmark. When you have people of the right quality with the right feeling, right here, you're there for the right reason, you can get the job done.

I think it's more the quality, not the quantity. I believe that through that period of time that I was speaking about, everyone in the province knew where northern Ontario was, knew all about northern Ontario. People are

being frustrated because, yes, we've lost some ground. We have lost some ground.

My other point is when you talk about the numbers. We lose five in the north, 22 in the south. After Leo retired, we had a rookie MPP sitting on the government side of the House after that next election. Maybe if there were fewer people you wouldn't be referred to as "what's his name in the back row." There would be fewer people and it would be a lot easier to get your job done.

There's a football game coming up on Sunday. I don't want to talk about the outcome of it, but I think Toronto has the edge. If, before the game, the officials said to the Edmonton Eskimos, "If you will send five of your players back to the dressing room, we will send 22 Toronto Argonauts back to the dressing room," what do you think would happen? I don't think they've got to go back to the locker room for that one. If I was representing this area, I would look forward to having fewer people down here, and this is the way I analysed it before the last election. I think this is great for northern Ontario. I think it's good for the mayors; I think it's good for various organizations. There are fewer people down here to compete with.

You people are MPPs. You know that even within your own parties there's competition: This riding wants this, this riding wants that. The less people, the better. Get a roomful of people and try and solve something. The more people, the more difficult it becomes. I would look forward to having less, as I'm talking about with the football game; there are going to be less people there whom you have to work with and convince to get things for your riding.

I also think as the ridings are larger we would see more commonsense decisions being made. I disagree with some of the expenditures of the last government, but we've seen moneys going into ridings where there was a member on the government side of the House. If the ridings are larger, maybe we'll have some more common sense. If there's work needed in another area, maybe it will get done and the money won't go just to support that candidate in the next election.

I also say that if people feel they can't do the job, don't run. It's very simple. I wonder too at the message that is coming out right now. We heard from our member that this government is going too fast. Now all of a sudden we're going too slow because we're going to interfere with his Christmas holidays. I'm concerned. Why is the member there? We're really concerned about taking time off for Christmas holidays. Shouldn't we be worried about legislation? Shouldn't we be worried about reducing the debt? Shouldn't we be worried about a lot of things other than not going to get time off for Christmas holidays?

On representation: We went through the VLTs. Our member voted against it, then when it came to third reading didn't show up; we didn't have representation. Now people are talking about representation. This is where the frustrations in the north are coming from. The job's not getting done. Federally we had a member who voted for gun legislation. The people up here didn't want him to vote that way. So it's not the number of people; it's the way they're doing the job. That's where the

frustrations are coming from, in my mind. If we send the right people, the job will get done.

People are also very afraid of change. Not too many people are from the north, but welcome to the north because this is the example I'm going to use. I'm going to show my age a little bit too, I guess. I was quite young but I did catch the end of when the horse was replaced by the skidder in the logging operation. For the people who were involved in that, there were very few people who said that skidder would work. That was the biggest joke there was, that this rubber-tired machine was going to go out into the bush and replace the horse. This was change. What a joke. Take me to a logging operation somewhere today and show me a horse. I'll take you and show you skidders. Yes, they're more powerful, a little more sophisticated, but the basics are the same. We're in the process now of change and I say when this is done and down the road when we judge this, it'll be the same result. We'll have skidders instead of horses. The skidder pulls a heck of a lot more wood than a horse does.

There are opportunities within this change. We should welcome the change and work within it. Don't just sit back and say, "It's not working very well now, so we'll make sure it doesn't work in the future." Take it on as a challenge. Let's not be scared of change.

I heard a comment from our last speaker and I think I heard — it was hard to hear back there — about the MPP having trouble getting around to birthday parties and so on. If I lived in Sioux Lookout, for example, is it more important for the government to spend an additional \$400,000 on an MPP or should we try and put some blacktop on that highway going up to Sioux Lookout? Where is a dollar better spent? That's getting to be a pretty expensive birthday party.

We have to look at priorities in this province and we have to get it together: What do we want? A lot of people would much rather drive on that new asphalt than have that situation. We're also going to have a lot less red tape down the road in this province. That is going to help eliminate some of the workload.

Getting back to this servicing, if people understand the difference between representation and service, and we can get those two divided and the service end is starting to be looked after, I don't see a problem.

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My last comment is that after I looked at this and welcomed this, there are actually some savings involved. Savings are last on my list, after I see all the benefits of going in this direction. I think anyone in organizations or anyone in municipal politics should take a step back, take a look at this and say: "There are less people down there. The person who goes, if we get the right person, is going to have a lot more voice than we have now, getting lost in the crowd."

In closing, I go back to the horse and the skidder. The skidders still have engines, rubber tires, transmissions, but there's been some adjusting done. I would say that as we go through this, if we have to address it again because there are some difficulties some places, let's address it. But I can't speak out against this because of the fears that some people have. I would actually, as a representative, welcome such a situation.

The Acting Chair: Mr Griffiths, we have some questions for you, three minutes to each caucus.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you, Mr Griffiths, for the presentation. I hope you'll excuse me. You've expressed your position and it coincides with my position on the bill. I just want to quickly use the time. The previous presenter spoke to the issue of the Who Does What panel, and I recognize everyone is anxiously awaiting the results of that and the government's implementation of the recommendations. You said there was no elected northern representation on the panel, and just for the record I wanted to correct that. I believe the chair of the Lakehead Board of Education is on the subpanel to deal with education.

Mr Griffiths: Yes.

Mr Hardeman: To clear up the issue of what the panel recommended, to align school boards with county boundaries, I think we would all recognize there are no counties in northern Ontario. I just wanted, for the record, to read into the record what their recommendation on the alignment of school boards was. It says:

"Where practical, public, separate and French-language boards should be of the same physical jurisdiction as a municipality. For efficiency, this could be a lower-tier municipality, an upper-tier municipality or several upper-tier municipalities. It could also mean a single public board equal to one upper-tier municipality and a separate board for several upper-tier municipalities. This alignment will allow better cooperation among school boards and municipalities in the recommended restructuring of service delivery."

Would you suggest that this recognizes the differences between northern and southern? In southern Ontario we also have a lot of municipalities that do not have a two-tier system. Would you suggest that this does look after the situation of the differences between northern and southern, that they did understand there is a difference?

Mr Griffiths: Yes, definitely. My understanding, as there was some restructuring and reductions made to municipalities, is that the north got off easy compared to the south, if I'm correct. I'm not in municipal politics.

The other thing I have noticed in the north is that there have been a number of cabinet ministers and many MPPs coming up here since the last election to say we're being ignored. I guess the truth is that, as voters, we didn't elect anyone — something I noticed through the campaign that I was surprised about was the lack of understanding of politics in our province. I didn't realize it was to that degree until I got into it. The people don't seem to understand. They sometimes expect things that can't happen.

Mr Miclash: Gord, it will be hard to believe I'm going to take exception to some of your comments, but I certainly will. I must remind you that I have run three campaigns. I've run on my record and it was a 4,000-vote plurality last time. So I must remind you that I'm not the little name in the back rows you suggested I might be.

In terms of the VLT vote, and this is an important point as well, my flight was ready to leave Kenora at 8 o'clock Monday morning to fly back to Toronto, the normal way I get back to Toronto; sometimes I go back Sunday. I did not get into Toronto till midnight on

Monday. The vote was called by the government at 3 o'clock. There was no notice before that. That's just an example of what it takes sometimes to get from the Kenora riding to the government. The vote was called at 3 o'clock.

Mr Griffiths: That's what we call a very convenient snow storm.

Mr Miclash: Let's put that issue to rest, because I've indicated a good number of times my feeling towards the VLT legislation. I think I've made that very clear to the folks in northwestern Ontario after the committee travelled to Kenora and we listened to the presentations, as did the government and the members of the opposition on that committee.

I must go to the parliamentary assistant's comment again —

Mr Griffiths: Frank, can I just ask —

Mr Miclash: — where he has indicated he will not support the legislation. This is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development, we must remember; this is the coauthor of *A Voice for the North*. He was the one who ran and became a member of the government and has indicated he will not support this legislation. Do you not agree with what he has indicated in terms of northern representation?

Mr Gilchrist: Excuse me, Mr Chair, on a point of order.

The Acting Chair: Mr Miclash, I'd like to caution you as to the approach you're taking here.

Mr Michael Brown: Mr Chair, you have no right to tell any member when he's speaking what he can speak about. He's got no right to heckle, to ask for points of order on Mr Miclash's time.

Mr Miclash: I listened to the rubbish from him. What are you talking about? I just listened to five minutes of his comments and you're saying I can't comment on what he said about representation in this riding?

The Acting Chair: All right, go ahead. You've got one minute left.

Mr Gilchrist: You're talking about according to Mr Murdoch. We just phoned his office and he said he never said that.

Mr Miclash: He has indicated that he is not going to vote for the legislation; he has indicated that.

Interjections.

Mr Miclash: Oh, so you're going to twist it around now. What he has said, you're going to say is not true.

The Acting Chair: Order.

Mr Griffiths: We're eating up my 20 minutes here. First of all, I'd like to get back to the issue, now that we're playing this game. You said you made it very clear about the VLTs. You voted against it, but you spoke for it in Kenora where nobody could hear you. Could you tell us today where you do stand, because nobody knows, I'm sorry.

Mr Miclash: I've indicated very clearly that VLTs will help the economy of this area and that we would work very closely with any organizations in this area that wish to implement VLTs in their establishments. I've made that very clear.

Mr Griffiths: If you'd made it Monday, you would have voted for it instead of against it like you did on second reading?

Mr Miclash: I certainly would have, with the blessing of my caucus. The argument I put forward to them, I would have voted —

Mr Griffiths: Okay, we just wanted to get that clear.

Mr Michael Brown: Mr Murdoch didn't appear because he was going to vote no.

Mr Miclash: Yes, let me make that point. Mr Murdoch was not there.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for coming forward with your presentation. I noticed during your presentation you were saying that people in northern Ontario are fearful of change. I would beg to disagree with you on that, because I've been in northern Ontario for the last 40 years and northern Ontarians are prepared to make change at the balloting boxes. We saw that. We saw three different majority governments in the last number of years. People are not afraid to vote for change.

But when we're dealing with legislation of this kind, one of the reasons the demand is made that we have public hearings throughout Ontario, especially northern Ontario, is that when there is no representation whatsoever on the government side, because the people saw fit not to vote any Conservatives in northern Ontario into the present government, the present members who are on the committee have an opportunity to travel around northern Ontario and listen to public presentations, like you're in favour of them and there were others who presented before who are strongly opposed to it, especially when you look at the fact that one representative is going to be expected to represent areas that are bigger than countries like Spain, Germany and Italy.

There are other changes that could be made as far as representation at Queen's Park is concerned. In all cases in the history of Ontario and Canada, it has always been the electoral boundaries commission that has gone out. The last federal riding redistribution was done by the electoral boundaries commission. There were minor adjustments made after Mulroney was thrown out of government. With the new government, they made some minor changes in Timmins-James Bay, and they listened to the people.

In this particular case, it is a government with the majority of seats in the Legislature that has determined that it is going to ram the legislation through. Had we not made a big fuss in the Legislature, we would have had no public hearings whatsoever and this would have become law without anybody knowing about what was going on, the same as they tried to do with Bill 26. So democracy was being shut down as far as we were concerned. I don't believe any government party should be taking control away from the election commission, where they go out and study the boundaries, rather than a political party ramming it through the Legislature. I just wanted to know if you had any comments on that.

Mr Griffiths: My first comment is that when you said about the people in northern Ontario being nervous of change, people generally — I'm not just saying northern Ontario — are nervous of change. I think any place across the country, probably in North America —

Mr Len Wood: But they've been making the change. They've had three different majority governments in Ontario.

Mr Griffiths: There are changes going on all over North America. People are nervous in all walks of life, but changes are being made and they're working out.

Mr Len Wood: The next election, there will be more changes. They'll throw out this government and they'll put another one in.

Mr Griffiths: Don't bet the farm on it.

Mr Len Wood: Oh, yes, it's happening. You see the polls going in the right direction.

Mr Griffiths: You must be reading different magazines than we are.

Mr Len Wood: Do I have more time, Mr Chair?

The Acting Chair: No. Thank you very much, Mr Griffiths, for coming today and making your views.

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JIM DUNPHY

The Acting Chair: Could we move to the next presenter, Mr Dunphy.

Mr Jim Dunphy: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the wonderful north. I am a municipal councillor in the town of Keewatin; however, I am here today as a concerned individual citizen of northern Ontario. I do not represent my council; however, I come with municipal council experience. Nor today do I represent any particular political colour, so I'm trying not to engage in any political debates with any members of the committee. It's been very interesting the last hour listening to what has been happening and so on. It's very nice this morning to have the opportunity to address members of all parties of government in the north, where a lot of the action happens.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on this very critical issue of Bill 81, which will greatly affect northern Ontario. If this bill is passed in its present form, its results could be very devastating for the people of northwestern Ontario. We will no longer be able to be properly represented in the decision-making process of this province. In these times of rapid and sometimes drastic changes currently being made by all levels of government in our communities, our province and in our country, it is critical that we have the best representation possible at all levels of government. We will not have that if Bill 81 is passed in its present form.

I think it accurate and without prejudice to say that the majority of the provincial decision-makers in this province do not even have a realistic understanding of the province's vastness. I ask the members of this committee, do you really know how far it is from Ottawa or Cornwall to the Manitoba border? I can tell you, it's a great distance. It's over 2,000 kilometres. I've driven it a number of times. I live in Keewatin and we in Keewatin feel that we are the first community in Ontario, not the last.

I'd ask the members of the committee to have a look at a government publication known as the Ontario roadmap. The province is so big that we can't even put the entire province on one side. Not only that, but we can't even put the two sides in the same scale to represent the entire province.

Ontario represents a vast land and a very unique group of people. I'm not going to get into words like "distinct society" and all of those. We'll leave that to the feds.

It is often all too obvious to us here in the northwest that those in the south have very little knowledge of where we are, much less understand our needs. Therefore it is even more critical that we have adequate representation in the north to represent the north. It's not uncommon, in some of my various jobs that I've had and my careers, to have received phone calls from people in Toronto with all innocence and sincerity saying: "Hey, look, I'd like to meet with you next week. I'm going to be in Thunder Bay. Can we do lunch?" They don't realize that I live five and a half hours from Thunder Bay. They have no concept of the distance.

I have had cabinet members — I won't go into which government it was, and I've been around this province for quite a while — come to the Kenora-Keewatin area, have been driving them around, showing them the community, and they say: "Hey, we've got two hours. Can we go over to Winnipeg for supper?" They have no idea of the size, the vast area of this country of ours, and more specifically the province of Ontario.

It's really difficult to understand this size unless you have travelled it. I feel strongly that every person who is elected as an MPP to the Legislature of Ontario should get on a bus in Ottawa some day right after the election and take a drive all the way across, and come back down through the southern route and maybe do the northern route in the other direction.

The riding specifically that we have that is being proposed here in this area is over 337,000 square kilometres. That's a huge land mass. I came from the Maritime provinces many years ago; that's where I grew up. That area is larger than all three of the Maritime provinces. Somebody earlier said that the province of Prince Edward Island has, I think, three or four federal members and 20 or 25 provincial members. The Ontario government wants one member to represent the same area.

I could go on all day — a number of people already have — and you're going to hear a lot more comparisons of land mass to areas in Europe and Canada and other places in the world, but I think you get the idea that this is a pretty big riding.

It would be physically impossible for any one person to adequately represent such a large area, not only because of the area itself but because of the entire geography. A gentleman over here said earlier in his comments something to the effect that he represented the largest southern riding. This will be without a doubt the largest riding in Ontario. I believe, sir, you have four-lane highways. We don't. I believe, sir, that you have very little snow. I talked on the Internet just last night to someone in southern Ontario and I think they had two inches in Peterborough. We've got three feet just this week. I think those are considerations.

Mr Miclash, in his comments about not being about to get to Toronto — we are very well represented in these ridings now, I must say, by both Mr Miclash and Mr Hampton, and I'm not taking sides in either direction. It was true that there were no airplanes flying out of the town of Kenora on Sunday or Monday. You can't get to

Toronto just whenever you want. It depends on the weather, and we don't have too much control over the weather. We can't just say, "Okay, I can't go by air so I'll drive down," because he wouldn't be there yet if he was driving. I drove back from Toronto about a month and a half ago in a bus. I left Toronto on Thursday morning; I had lunch here at the Husky next door on Saturday — not on Thursday or Friday but on Saturday — and I still wasn't home.

I think we should consider what this part of our wonderful province really represents. We have a wealth of natural resources, all very lucrative to this province in terms of royalties, stumpage fees, taxes and all the other user fees that we have now and that are going to come in the future. We have a forest industry that has a major impact on our labour force and produces high-quality products that are in demand all around the world, anything from kraft pulp to newsprint to very high quality finished paper, produced right in this community. We've got a large mining industry, rich with gold mines and all of the other minerals that you want to name, producing a number of raw materials and finished products that support many other industries locally, provincially, nationally and internationally. We have to be very concerned about those. These and our many other resources produce a lot of spinoff industries — construction, sales, equipment manufacture, recreation and many, many more. We in the north want to be very sure that these industries are well represented in the Legislature.

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The big one that we really have here is water. We've got clean water that we can go out to many lakes and drink without having to fill it with Javex and all of the other wonderful filters and purifiers that other areas have to use. This is a very scarce commodity, not only locally or provincially or nationally, but in the international market. The Americans would love to have Lake of the Woods in their whole United States, rather than just the small bottom borderline.

Northern and specifically northwestern Ontario is known worldwide for its tourism resources. Hundreds of thousands of tourists come here each year to enjoy our beauty, our clean environment and our resources. We want to ensure that we have representation in Toronto that will keep all of those good things in our tourism industry so that these people from Europe and Asia and all other parts of the world will keep coming here, spending their dollars to increase our own economy.

These are just some of the valuable assets in our area, and this government is proposing that it all be represented by one member? That's not really realistic, I don't feel. We have to bear in mind that about 100 years ago, where we're sitting today was not part of Ontario; it was part of Manitoba. Somewhere along the line a few years later there were some border negotiations and the border line moved over to West Hawk Lake. Ontario wanted us then. I'd venture to say that today if we only have one representative in Toronto, I question how serious that is, but boy, Manitoba would love to have all of our resources and our tourism opportunities. Just come to Kenora in the summertime and see the 20,000 Manitoba cars. We love them.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're a very hardworking and proud group of Canadians, more specifically Ontarians, and we want to continue to be. If the proposed new riding comes into being, and many people have used and will continue to use these statistics today, it will have more than 25 municipalities and organized areas, as well as 50 first nations communities, with a total population of just 75,000. But I ask, can one MPP represent this number of communities adequately?

I know Toronto is a very large city and I don't debate that in any way, but they have a lot more than one person for that one municipality and there's a system of government just like any other there. They have a municipal council, and that's who the government should be directly dealing with rather than all the little facets of the city. Possibly a more fair distribution of this riding — and this is a suggestion — could be a division into two ridings: a distinctly northern riding representing all areas north of 51, and a southern riding representing the remainder of the proposed area.

In the previous paragraph I neglected to mention that this riding contains in excess of 50 first nations communities, and they are basically in the northern half of our riding. This would give our first nations communities a more clear and direct voice in provincial affairs. These people would represent ownership of huge land masses in this province. These people should have a direct say in the future through our legislative system.

Looking at northern Ontario in general, we will all be very underrepresented with the proposed reduction of 15 to 10 MPPs. It will not give the north in general a fair voice in our Legislature: 87% of the land mass represented by 10% of the people.

Using the federal riding maps as a guide is not really a fair comparison for our area. Did the Maritime provinces use that? We don't have just one representation for the Maritimes; I believe there are probably 10 or 12.

I feel there must be a fair blend of representation based on a combination of geography and population. Both must be considered. I have no problem with change, but we all have to look at it very carefully to ensure that it's a change for the better and not just a change for the sake of change.

I ask that you carefully once again look at our map and reconsider the proposed changes in all the north. Try to get a map, though, that has all of Ontario on one side so that you can see what it's all about.

In our case our local MPPs are very good. We are represented well in northwestern Ontario, as I said before, by Mr Miclash, and I'm sure Mr Hampton represents his people well in his riding. The only way we could be well represented with the new riding that is being proposed, that I hope is not going to be changed, is that we go get the guy down south called Superman, but I think he's kind of busy in Gotham City these days and not really available, because he's the only guy who could get around this entire riding of this size.

It is important. I've heard comments this morning that it's no big deal if the MPP can't go out to a birthday party or the MPP can't go visit somebody in Sioux Lookout or Big Trout Lake or Keewatin. That is a big deal. That's why we elected the MPP: We want to see

this person. We don't want his assistant or his assistant to the assistant to the assistant or the secretary to the assistant or somebody like that. We want to see the MPP.

In our case we've had very good fortune, I guess partly because Mr Miclash comes from our community. He has visited our municipal council meetings and he has attended many functions in Kenora and Keewatin and all of the other communities in the riding. He has also attended many functions in the far north, which is not even being mentioned today as to travel problems, when you have to take a scheduled airline that has four seats in it and if you're lucky it goes today and if the wind's blowing it can't, or if the lake's not frozen, it's not going to make it in for the next six weeks until it does freeze.

Please keep in mind there's much more to this province than Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe. I trust you as a committee will listen to our concerns and take them back to government. Mr Chairman, I was really concerned this morning when I was driving down in my two-hour drive to get here that I heard a comment on the radio that your comments in the south were very good and nobody wanted a change and you really didn't see a lot of need for change in this legislation. I ask you, sir, to reconsider that and think it over very carefully after you've heard what the people have to say here in the north today, and that's not being disrespectful, sir, when I say that.

As well, I feel it's critical that our local MPPs be given an opportunity to address and offer their valuable input and experience to this committee. I realize that it was a decision of this committee not to have them make presentations at the public meetings and I fully agree with that. This does devote all your public time to the public, and that is very important and I think it's wonderful. However, possibly a time could be set aside at the completion of the hearings for their input. I realize that they have fair and ample opportunity to address the issues in the Legislature, but very often that is too late. The third reading will have all of the changes and it will be very difficult for them to make good and open suggestions at that time rather than political debate that we even see going on here today.

Once again I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my comments and concerns with you this morning. I ask that you give this legislation very serious consideration and I wish you well in your deliberations. Please enjoy your visit to the northwest and come back at any time.

The Acting Chair: Thank you for appearing before us today, Mr Dunphy. Thank you for your vigorous views. Have a safe drive back to Keewatin.

1020

HUBERT MORRISON

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mr Morrison, the mayor of Sioux Lookout.

Mr Hubert Morrison: Can't say the first name, Chair?

The Acting Chair: Welcome, Mayor Hubert Morrison. You have 20 minutes you can use however you want.

Mr Morrison: My name is Hubert Morrison, of course, and I'm the mayor of the town of Sioux Lookout.

I want to thank you for this opportunity to voice my concern about Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act.

I'm in my second term on council in Sioux Lookout. Prior to that I was employed for 36 years with the provincial government, 31 years under a Conservative government and five under a Liberal government. All of the time that former member Leo Bernier was in the House, I was there. I might say that many times over the years Mr Bernier and our current member, Frank Miclash, have taken trips with me into the far north with aircraft and under various and trying conditions. They had to pay their own way, mind you. Right, Frank?

Mr Miclash: Certainly.

Mr Morrison: In any event, because this act will directly affect the future of citizens of Sioux Lookout and northern Ontario, it is appropriate that Mr Harris's government hear our concerns through these public meetings.

As the mayor of the town of Sioux Lookout, I do understand the government's desire to address the issue of the deficit. While I may not entirely agree with all the actions being taken, particularly the timing of these actions, I realize that something has to be done to resolve the province's financial problems. Some of the actions, such as the reduction in transfer payments to municipalities, cuts to health care and education, reduction in funding for maintenance and repair of highways, have a serious impact on the residents of northern Ontario.

Believe me, I drove down Highway 72 from Sioux Lookout this morning and — well, it's about the same as it has been for years anyway. The effects of these changes will be far-reaching and will require a great deal of rethinking and reorganizing how business is done in the north. As a politician, I can live with and accommodate most of these changes. However, there is one change that I cannot accommodate: reducing northern Ontario's representation in the provincial government.

Under Bill 81, the new Kenora-Rainy River riding will be one third of the land mass of Ontario. The new riding will include more than 25 municipal councils and local service boards and more than 50 first nations communities. I can tell you that, throughout my 36 years, I have visited all of those communities many times. It is totally unrealistic to expect one person to adequately represent this large geographic area. One person, no matter how dedicated, cannot visit all the constituents in this proposed large region on any kind of regular basis. Not only would it be impossible to visit the constituents in this large riding, it is unreasonable to expect that one person can thoroughly understand and adequately represent a riding of this kind of land mass.

It is also likely that residents in the riding would have limited access to this representative because of the size of the riding. It would be more difficult for individual residents to contact their representative personally for support of an issue of concern because, while a majority elects a representative, it is not possible that the residents in the far reaches of the riding will know their representative well enough to rely on his or her support when they need it.

You've heard this one before, but I'm going to say it again. The number of people in the new riding would be in excess of 75,000. This may not be a large population

for an MPP to represent. I heard a joke while I was watching the legislature channel. One member, I believe, said that trees don't vote. No, they don't vote but they bring in a hell of a lot of dues and money to the government that goes down there.

This may not be a large population for an MPP to represent. What I ask the government to do is keep in mind the area the 75,000-plus live in, an area larger than Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined, and a previous speaker had mentioned the Maritimes. It is insulting to the residents in the north to suggest that one individual, no matter how dedicated, can adequately represent this number of constituents in a riding that covers one third of the land mass of Ontario.

This leads to a question of representation in the provincial government for northern Ontario. The present provincial government elected no members west of the Premier's riding of North Bay. The north represents 87% of the land mass of Ontario and we presently have 12% of the MPPs. Under Bill 81, the north's representation will be reduced to less than 10%. Although residents of northern Ontario have less representation than other areas of the province, we pay the same taxes. This is very close to taxation without representation. I believe our neighbours to the south, the United States, went to war on an issue similar to this.

My understanding is that Bill 81 will reduce the number of Ontario MPPs from 130 to 103 and, further, that the MPPs representing northern Ontario will be reduced from 15 to 10. If the government proceeds with this redistribution, northern Ontario's representation will drop by 33.3% while there will be an increase of 5.5% in MPPs from the 905 or greater Toronto area belt. How can the Premier balance this with his promise to provide a greater voice in the north as he did in his *A Voice for the North* publication during his last campaign? Premier Harris stated in *A Voice for the North*:

"The people of northern Ontario have given us a clear message: Their needs and concerns are not being met by the provincial government. They feel left out of the decision-making process. Inappropriate and unnecessary laws and regulations, designed to meet the concerns of the urban south, are being imposed on them. Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party are prepared to act."

With Bill 81, it appears Mr Harris has acted. He has reduced that voice; reduced that representation which he suggested we need in the north.

In addition to reducing the voice of the north, Bill 81 ties the boundaries of provincial ridings to federal ridings. When the federal ridings change, so will the riding boundaries for provincial elections. Where is the autonomy for Ontario? Shouldn't we have the right to set the boundaries for the ridings for the provincial election?

As the mayor of Sioux Lookout, I strongly recommend the Kenora and Rainy River district not be combined. Our voice in Queen's Park is limited as it is and combining the two ridings is close to eliminating our voice entirely.

A little while ago when one speaker was up, I thought I was watching the Legislature channel when I saw the banner going back and forth, and then I finally realized

I had to turn that on this afternoon to see that when I get home.

I thank you for allowing me this opportunity to make this presentation.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Morrison. We have about nine minutes for questions. We'll start with the Liberals.

Mr Miclash: Hubert, thank you for your comments. You certainly bring back some memories of our first trip back in 1987. That was my first trip into the northern remote communities.

Mr Morrison: Got your eyes opened, didn't you?

Mr Miclash: I certainly did. I just wish that other members of the Legislature would make that trip to find out exactly what we're talking about here because I know a lot of them would have not visited a remote first nation community, one that can only be accessed by air. It certainly was, and it's been quite an experience since 1987.

I want to get back to your concept of recognizing the land mass and the population in northern Ontario. As you say, this will bring great change should this legislation go forward as it's proposed. We know that the federal government has a federal boundaries commission. Do you see a need for a provincial boundaries commission and, if so, how would you see it looking at this question that we're looking at today?

Mr Morrison: I'm not sure that I see the need for a provincial commission. I haven't thought that much about it, Mr Miclash. I don't know.

Mr Miclash: We've spoken — and the previous presenter brought this up — about splitting the riding into two distinct areas: one that would represent the far north north of 51st and one that would represent the southern portion of this region. How do you feel about that concept?

Mr Morrison: I think that's a workable concept, from my point of view. I have talked to others on that particular concept. Maybe what we need is a native representative across the north and so on in the south.

Mr Miclash: Do you see a commission such as this taking a look at — as I indicated, it happens at the federal level right now where they actually take a look at the regions. It has been indicated a good number of times here this morning that various regions of this country are recognized for the lower number of people but the larger land mass. Do you see a commission possibly working in that area to maybe recognize that and present that case?

1030

Mr Morrison: Yes, I think a commission could look at that and recognize that, for sure.

Mr Miclash: At the present time it has been said that with less representation in the House, in essence what we're doing is giving more power to the Premier. I quoted from a document earlier where one of the MPPs from the Conservative government said that many of the decisions were made in the Premier's office, and some people have indicated that we're giving more clout to specific interest groups and taking away from the representatives across the province. Do you agree with that statement?

Mr Morrison: I don't agree with that.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your presentation. I've been listening very carefully and I notice that on page 2 you say it's insulting to the residents of the north that one individual could represent the expanded boundaries. You're of the same opinion as Mayor David Hughes from the town of Cochrane, as was quoted in the Timmins press, saying that it's another slap in the face for northern Ontario from Mike Harris, when he campaigned for one thing during the election campaign, that there's going to be a voice for the north, and then he turns around and slaps northern Ontario residents with a bill of this kind. Even the title of it, the nickname they put on it, "fewer politicians," is saying that there will be no voice for the north.

That's in addition to the reduction they have in MNR, OPP, health care and education. With a lot of these services, the bodies are being moved out of northern Ontario into southern Ontario — from Burk's Falls or the North Bay area — and the towns are ending up with empty houses as a result because people are not moving back in. Nursing homes are being closed down, we have empty MNR buildings, but a lot of the government services are being increased into the Premier's riding.

I think you made an excellent presentation saying that there will be no voice for the north and it was misleading to think there would be during the election campaign, when you come in with legislation of this kind in addition to all the cuts: the closing of hospital beds and threatening the closing of hospitals. Which direction are we heading in in northern Ontario? Are we going to have a voice at Queen's Park or is it going to end up being two provinces, as some have indicated that it should be? If 87% of the land mass cannot get a voice at Queen's Park, is it heading towards a separation into two provinces where you have the large urban areas representing one province and northern Ontario representing another province? The renewable resources are all here and they're being used. I just want to know if you want to comment on that. I don't know how much more time I have, so I'll leave you some time.

Mr Morrison: I tend to agree with you, Mr Wood, on the issue. With the making of one large riding — as most of you here are aware, the closest to the people are municipal elected officials, and I feel that the next closest are provincial members, and then the feds. Sure, that's a large riding federally. That member does not have to be nearly as close to the people as the provincial members do, and certainly not as close as municipal officials. I just don't think it's a good idea to combine that into one large riding. I just don't see how one person, it doesn't matter who it is, can cover that area.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you for your presentation. I appreciate your coming before us here today. The diverse views, obviously, we find very interesting, the diverse views we have heard from people living in the same area. In Mr Griffiths's comment earlier, certainly one thing I can agree with is that representation is not about whether you are there to deal with a specific problem. Our staff deal with 95% of our problems anyway. It's whether you can articulate the concerns of the north —

Mr Morrison: I disagree with Mr Griffiths.

Mr Gilchrist: That's fine. It's whether you can articulate the interests of your community down at Queen's Park, particularly when it comes to drafting legislation. I look at the map of northern Ontario right now and the area north of the 51st parallel was represented by three members, is represented by three members. I know the north has very different realities from the south. There is no doubt of that on this side of the House either. But when we look at what the north is comprised of, obviously you would agree, I would think, that Sudbury and North Bay and Thunder Bay and the Sault are just as urban as Peterborough or Barrie or Kitchener or Hamilton in the south, so let's not confuse those ridings with the kind of problems in the rural northern ridings.

And when we look at the rural northern ridings the extent of change isn't that great. When the federal commission went around — I'm reading from the report, page 14: "Few submissions were heard in Thunder Bay concerning northwestern Ontario, and the commission was able to accommodate most requests made for this area." There was only one request that affected this whole section of northwestern Ontario. "The commission slightly adjusted the limits of Thunder Bay-Atikokan with Kenora-Rainy River to include a small population just south of Finlayson Lake with Thunder Bay-Atikokan and thus follow the geographic orientation of this isolated community."

I guess I'm confused. If the MPs believe, and the people in northwest Ontario obviously agreed or they would have made submissions to the federal boundary commission, that MPs can represent, down in Ottawa, the federal issues that affect the people in the north, why is that any different for MPPs being able to represent provincial issues down at Queen's Park?

Mr Morrison: Most of the things we deal with in the municipality are dealt with through the provincial government. We deal very little with federal MPs. It gives them a much easier chance to handle this large riding. It's obvious to me, member, that you are not familiar with the north.

Mr Gilchrist: Well, I grew up in a pulp and paper family —

Mr Morrison: Where was that?

Mr Gilchrist: I can say I have been touring through the north since I was four years old. I can tell you there hasn't been a workday, probably since the election, that we haven't had members and cabinet ministers in the north. In fact, the last time I was in Thunder Bay we had 18 members, two cabinet ministers, there on one day, coincidentally, all passing through for different things, and we'd had two other cabinet ministers in the previous two days.

Mr Morrison: Thunder Bay is not the north.

Mr Gilchrist: No, passing through, I said.

Mr Morrison: When I talk about the north, I talk about from here north. I have not seen a cabinet minister here since your government has been in power, and I am of no political stripe.

Mr Gilchrist: I know of four that have been through here, at least.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Morrison for coming and making your views known.

Mr Morrison: I can talk to you about this later if you wish.

The Acting Chair: Perhaps you two gentlemen could discuss it later. Our next deputant is — Mr Angus is about to get here. His car went off into the ditch, I believe. Mr Angus will be here at about 11:45 am.

Mr Miclash: What was the reason? I'm sorry, Mr Chair.

The Acting Chair: His car went off the road. He's going to be here very shortly.

Mr Miclash: That's what happens in a northern municipality. Here we are.

Mr Len Wood: And the Conservatives are laughing about it.

Mr Miclash: Take that back to your Premier. Take that back to him.

Mr Young: You can't blame our government because he goes in a ditch. Get serious.

Interjections.

The Acting Chair: Mr Young, Mr Miclash. Gentlemen, ladies, we have people here today. We didn't come to discuss among ourselves. We are here to hear the representatives of the public. May we proceed, please.

1040

CRAIG NUTTALL

The Acting Chair: Mr Nuttall, please identify yourself. You have 20 minutes in which to make your views known.

Mr Craig Nuttall: My name is Craig Nuttall. I have a consulting business that does consulting in the northern reserves, Fort Severn, Deer Lake and so on. I do consulting work for sawmills in the area of Rainy River as well as Kenora and Fort Frances.

I'm simply amazed to see today that we're having these hearings and some of the people are acting like we see in question period, just so they can grandstand and make hollering and screaming. I don't think that's what we need in the north. We have to have civil people talking about issues.

Now, let's talk about Bill 81. It really amazes me. The government has said, and most of us have gone along with it, that we have to downsize, that MNR has to decrease, and corporations are decreasing, with less management and working harder. All of a sudden, the MPs are saying: "Don't touch us. We love to do what we do and we love our salaries."

I've got a quotation here from the Atikokan. The leader of the Liberal Party has said she can look after Atikokan and Fort William because she believes that she would be able to stay in close contact with the people. I'd like to say that the Atikokan population, with this new bill, would be 76,922. Kenora's population, that our member would have to look after, is 76,320, 500 more people than Mrs McLeod said she would have no problems looking after.

Interjection.

Mr Nuttall: Frank, I have the floor for a change, thank you.

It amazes me that we say we are not being looked after in the north. My God, we're getting rid of 22 members from southern Ontario that we have to hassle with all the time to tell us where we are. We're losing five, granted, but let's look at what the north has. We have the Northern Ontario Development Corp offices. Every office in every community has a northern development office that looks after thousands of requests from citizens in northern Ontario, which the southern politicians don't have. Every one of the members on that side knows that the Northern Ontario Development offices are a plus for our area.

I was on council for six years before my term expired and I can tell you that the only time we used our provincial member was to cut ribbons. Most of the time when we needed a provincial member we had to ask him to come up, and then he would lobby for us. That's the only time. Our member talks about — and I really think this is great — Bill Murdoch voting against the bill. The vote hasn't even come to the floor yet.

Mr Miclash: He said he would.

Mr Nuttall: Our member has voted twice against the VLTs and then got the voter's sickness that he couldn't be in Toronto. Let me tell you something: If the bill was important enough and he knows the Legislature is sitting, I would be in Toronto for that vote, to stand up for your people.

Mr Miclash: Yes, and miss constituency week.

Mr Nuttall: They say the voice in the north is going. Well, I can tell you that we, through the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, many times go down to his office and ask him for things that we can't get from our local member because he's too busy in the Legislature complaining about what the government's doing. I think we need an MPP who's a worker, who for a change doesn't lobby and get up in the Legislature, and the only time he does is when members from our community are there.

Let's look at the cost: What does an MPP cost us? It's \$400,000 a year when you look at the salary, the secretaries and so on, \$400,000 a year that could be spent elsewhere, in our hospitals, on our roads — and I must say the government is doing a good job on roads. This is the thing that really gets me. Then we did have public hearings in the federal process. Not one of our members was at those hearings, not one, not the NDP, not the Liberal; no one was at that hearing complaining about it. So are we getting what we deserve? I think we are, with the members we have now. We have to have a strong voice in northern Ontario and we have to keep the northern development offices open and use them as a liaison. They do a tremendous amount of work for us, and that's what we need.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Nuttall. We have nine minutes for questions. We'll start with Mr Wood.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your presentation. During your presentation, you put a lot of emphasis on the fact that northern development offices are going to stay open. Do we have any reassurance that you're getting from your people that during the next round of cuts, which is going to be announced next week, another \$3 billion, that the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will not be attacked as severely as they were

in the last budget and that there's going to be money available for protecting and increasing jobs in northern Ontario, as there was over the last number of years?

I don't have that reassurance. I understand it's going to be a severe cut-and-burn, slash financial statement and that's part of reducing the \$8 billion. Then there's got to be an additional \$6 billion per year found to give the tax break, so I'm just wondering where your reassurance is. You're saying you're in favour of reducing the five politicians. What is northern Ontario going to end up with, with cuts to education and health care and what is coming?

Mr Nuttall: Being a realistic person I don't look in crystal balls. I look at reality and deal with it when or before it happens. In my experience in municipal council, if we were to do guesswork all the time I don't think we'd accomplish anything. If the offices are working, why would we discontinue them? You're from the north. You should understand that you probably have a lot of inquiries coming into the northern development and mines office. It probably helps you as a member because you don't have to deal with the day-to-day operations.

Mr Len Wood: We don't want to lose them.

Mr Nuttall: That's right. But you're assuming we will lose them and you're guessing — again, fearmongering.

Mr Len Wood: I'm not guessing. I'm saying, "Where's the \$3 billion in cuts going to come from?"

Mr Nuttall: I have no idea, sir. You should know more about that than I do.

Mr Len Wood: And where is the \$6-billion tax break going to come from?

Mr Nuttall: You keep throwing in the tax break. Let's talk about whether the offices will be gone. I don't know if they will be. If you don't know, nobody knows.

Mr Len Wood: There's been nothing happening in the last 16 months with northern development and mines with Chris Hodgson.

Mr Young: I would like to clarify. One of the people opposite tried to indicate that somehow it's the government's fault if somebody drives off the highway. I didn't make light of it at all. But there are problems on the highways everywhere. I drive on the QEW over 30 kilometres a day to my office, with thousands of other people. I see accidents daily. It takes an hour to drive 30 kilometres. There are people reading, eating, drinking coffee and talking on the phone. It's dangerous on highways everywhere. I want to clarify that.

Mr Len Wood: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I don't believe he has any right whatsoever to correct my record. I made the statements. I accused him of laughing at people who are going off the road and I stand by that.

Mr Young: Mr Chair, will please stop the clock?

Mr Len Wood: And I stand by that. He can correct his own record, but not my record.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood. Mr Young, continue.

Mr Young: Getting away from partisan politics, Premier Harris did something — one of many things he's done that I'm very proud of — which was to increase the representation and provide better representation in the north. He initiated a meeting of the northern caucus for members of both the federal and provincial governments

of all parties. I was very proud of that and I think the people in the north were proud of that. It was attended by the federal Liberals, provincial Liberals and PCs, and the NDP boycotted the meeting for some reason. I think that's a disgrace, because the best way to get representation in the north in addition to the current MPPs is to get people together who represent the north and address the issues. Can you comment on that, please?

Mr Nuttall: I was very disappointed that they didn't go because I think there was a lot accomplished. In talking to a couple of federal Liberal MPs who were there, they said they wished the provincial representatives were there because it was a very worthwhile meeting. They talked about issues, and Joe Comuzzi was there, and he said he thought it was good and that he was very disappointed that our member — probably stranded somewhere with voter's flu — was not there. It's amazing that they cry the blues about what they want to do but they're never there.

1050

I'd like to make one statement here. One presenter said we haven't had any cabinet ministers in this area. I would like to say we have had cabinet ministers in this area. We have had the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs here; we've had Chris Hodgson here; we've had the Minister of Education and training in Kenora; we've had Palladini down here; we've had numerous members down here. So we have communications with them, and they do correspond with us, and I think it's great that they're doing what they're doing.

Mr Miclash: Before we begin, Mr Nuttall, are you the president of the local Conservative association?

Mr Nuttall: Yes, I am, and also the same as what Pat Skillen was: president of the federal Liberal association, when he made a presentation for the VLTs.

Mr Miclash: Thank you very much. I just wanted that on the record.

The previous presenter indicated that in *A Voice for the North*, the document that I'm sure you're aware of, the Premier said that northern representation needed to be improved. He felt that a Mike Harris government would increase northern representation. Do you see this bill doing that?

Mr Nuttall: I think he did *A Voice for the North* before the election, and he was hoping we would get rid of our sitting member, but it didn't happen, therefore I still think we have a voice in the north. We have the cabinet ministers coming here. There's an opportunity to talk to them. In fact, we have Dianne Cunningham coming here on December 3 and 4. She'll be going to Kenora again to speak to the women's resource centre at a public meeting, and we hope you're there, Frank.

Mr Miclash: It has been indicated by Mr Murdoch that he will vote against this legislation. We know he was one of the authors of *A Voice for the North*, the document the northern Conservative candidates carried around with them and held near and dear to their hearts. Are you saying you disagree with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines?

Mr Nuttall: Mr Miclash, I'll tell you something: Mr Murdoch hasn't voted yet. You voted twice on the VLTs, stood up in the Legislature and said, "I vote against

them." The third time you didn't go to the vote but you voiced your opinion in the press and you weren't there. So I don't know how Mr Murdoch is going to vote. Again you're assuming.

Mr Miclash: Would you kindly present to me the evidence that I voted against the VLTs at any time in the Legislature?

Mr Nuttall: It was in Hansard, and you stood up in the Legislature. We watch the comedy hour you put on.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Nuttall, for appearing before us today.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mayor Armstrong. Would you like to come to the table and give us your views on Bill 81?

Mr Gordon Armstrong: It's a privilege to be here today. I'm here to speak on behalf of NOMA, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, and most of you probably know what NOMA is about. It represents 50 municipalities from White River to the Manitoba border. This area is presently represented by five MPPs and I want to share with you today the concerns we have with reducing the number to three MPPs throughout the great northwest. We are very concerned about that.

The reason we are concerned, I believe, is that we have many unique situations in northwestern Ontario that you should consider when you're making your recommendations. Such things as the vast area, distances between communities, weather, the diverse people and accessibility of the present MPPs are some of our concerns. We believe that these conditions are different in northwestern Ontario compared to southern Ontario. I would like to go through the points I've raised here and then make my concluding remarks.

Distances: The present riding requires our MPP to drive approximately eight hours from one end of the riding to the other. I left home at 7 o'clock this morning and just arrived about five minutes ago to make this presentation to you today, and I'm still within the riding you're proposing to put forward. That's four hours. I had to pry my fingers off the steering wheel because of the driving conditions; I was like this. This is different from southern Ontario, where an MPP can visit his or her riding in about two hours of travel time. If you combine the Kenora and Rainy River ridings it's impossible for one person to drive and visit all areas of his riding within at least a day.

The weather is also a very big concern to us. In winter months travel in northwestern Ontario is much more unpredictable, treacherous and stressful than in other parts of this province. This also hinders people from having access to their MPP. If I hadn't driven through snow and slush and ice to be here this morning NOMA would not have had a voice here today. But I believed that it was important enough that I took that risk, and there's a stress; you feel very stressed out when you drive for four hours and you're like this every minute of the time. You don't have those conditions in southern Ontario.

The diverse people: We have a wide variety of peoples in the north. We have 50 first nations communities, and

lots of them are not served by roads. They have to be flown in, and each one of them is a diverse community. We have many farming, industrial, mining and forestry communities. They are very diverse. We believe it is almost impossible for one MPP to visit every one of these areas and understand the conditions of each community.

The most important part is accessibility. This concern is of utmost importance to everyone. Whether we live in southern Ontario, northeastern Ontario or northwestern Ontario, we all believe that our MPP should be accessible to us. I believe that's a true statement. If we were to increase the present area, our MPP would be less accessible. In southern Ontario a riding boundary could be moved 20 miles and perhaps include 50,000 to 75,000 people and still be accessible to the people they represent. This would not be the case in northeastern or northwestern Ontario. To increase the distance by hundreds of miles might not increase the number of constituents as in southern Ontario, but increased distances would reduce the accessibility of MPPs substantially.

If you have to put four hours on the road to try to meet with one person and four hours to meet with the next person, you're not going to be accessible. If you have to travel more than four hours, eight hours on the road, whom are you going to be accessible to? One a day. We ask you to think about the difference between having to travel all this area and be accessible and traveling for an hour and being able to meet with anyone you wish and as many as you wish. There's a big difference.

The next point, the difference between federal and provincial representation: The MP who represents northwestern Ontario in Ottawa deal with issues far removed from the local level whereas the MPP deals with concerns that are more directly related to the people, like education, health and municipal law. What I'm talking about there is that our Liberal member for this area deals with totally different things from Frank or Howard or others who serve this northwest area. They deal with different topics. They deal with more relevant topics that we deal with every day, and we want you to consider that as well.

1100

In conclusion, we want the government of this great province to take into consideration the above concerns while making this decision. The distances, the accessibility, the diversity of the area, the uniqueness of the area — this is something that makes Ontario so beautiful, the fact that we're so unique, but it's also a problem that should be dealt with on an individual basis. We don't all fit the same shoe size in this room, so why should we think we should all fit the same criteria when we're trying to make riding boundaries?

We're not trying to get something over and above our counterparts in southern Ontario. All we want is for you to consider both areas having accessibility, and it's much more difficult to have accessibility in northwestern Ontario than it is in southern Ontario.

Ladies and gentlemen, that is my presentation to you today. There are a couple of letters attached, one I wrote to the Premier and one that was written by the president of Rainy River District Municipal Association. I attach them just for information's sake. I thank you very much and I would be willing to answer any questions.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Armstrong. We have 12 minutes left, so we'll start with the government.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mayor Armstrong. I appreciate your taking the four hours to come up and see us. I've driven that same route and the weather wasn't quite that bad, but I do know what an arduous drive it is.

Just a couple of things to start out with. I don't mean this to be at all combative; I'm genuinely curious. I'm looking at your own letterhead and you show that NOMA represents an area actually greater than the territory of the three proposed northwest Ontario ridings. Would you say that NOMA does a good job of representing the interests of the constituent municipalities?

Mr Armstrong: We have one president, one past president, one first vice-president, one second vice-president, one third vice-president and one fourth vice-president — it's a combined effort — plus an executive director.

Mr Gilchrist: But you have no problem addressing the geographical realities, and the fact that it's centred in Thunder Bay has not been a particular —

Mr Armstrong: The executive director lives in Thunder Bay but I live in Rainy River and we do a lot of our work by telephone.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm just trying to pick up on your point of accessibility because again, and not to be repetitive, with everybody who asks to see me in the riding being accommodated on Fridays during constituency day, I'm lucky to have eight people who actually want to see me in person.

On the other hand, I'll probably get 100 to 120 phone calls a week personally over and above what my staff deal with. And almost invariably, any industry or any union presentation — I had the firefighters come down and see me; in fact, three different groups in the last two days — almost always do it at Queen's Park because it's the best use of their time. They can get around to see all the MPPs in the course of a day or two.

How do I relate that to the fact that even Mr Dunphy himself earlier mentioned that he was talking over the Internet to someone down in Peterborough to determine the weather down there? We have all sorts of technology at our disposal. The members in the north don't even have the 1-800 phone service charged against their budgets. So whether it's phone access or Internet access or video conferencing, why wouldn't we be looking at new and innovative ways of making sure the member is available in some form, but not necessarily by forcing them to get out and drive four hours to see one or two constituents?

Let me ask you one other point, because I know our time's limited, and you could respond to both. Right now the members are spending four days a week at Queen's Park and one day effectively doing constituency work, but that is totally their choice. If it really is the case for the three or four geographically large northern ridings that it takes time to get from point A to point B, why wouldn't the members then, who have absolute power to do this, simply say: "I'm going to be up here Thursday and Friday. Thursday I will spend in Kenora and Dryden, and Friday I will spend in Rainy River and Fort Frances"? Surely that's an option. Why couldn't the members do that and organize their time better?

Mr Armstrong: I think that's probably a question the member could answer himself. Then you've got them trying to decide who's important, their constituents or sitting down in the House. Which is most important, the chicken or the egg? I'm not prepared to answer that question on those grounds. How can I decide what's more important, whether they're in the House for a debate or whether they're up in the riding? Yes, they can make their own decisions of where they are going to be.

In answer to your other question, a lot of areas in our riding do not have the joy of the Internet. We do not have the joy of telephones that you can ride around in the car and talk on that you have.

Mr Gilchrist: It's funny you mentioned that, because a Liberal member who was with us in London, Ms Pupatello, said, that "What was so striking" — we were talking about the northern aspect — "was that northern communities really hadn't reached the level technologically to even afford a cell phone in that area. That's why it was a bit strange, because I think that may come in a couple of decades...." I was intrigued to see that Dryden is on the front page of the paper today announcing that in the next couple of months, or weeks even, you're going to have cell phone service in this town. So if we want to talk about who's out of touch, I suggest that if that's the Liberal view of what the north is all about, I find that quite distressing.

Mr Michlash: One of the previous presenters indicated that Mr Harris had made a commitment to the people of the north, and I go back to that commitment. Mr Armstrong, I'm sure you're familiar with it. It comes from A Voice for the North, the campaign document that Mr Harris and the many Conservative candidates across the north presented to the people. In it, he indicated, "The people of northern Ontario have given us a clear message: Their needs and concerns are not being met by the provincial government. They feel left out of the decision-making process.... Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party are prepared to act."

In your capacity in the area of northern Ontario as a reeve, do you feel that Mr Harris has followed through on that commitment?

Mr Armstrong: The Who Does What committee that's been probably at the top of everybody's mind over the last six months, when it was first set up, had 12 members. All these 12 members were within a 500-mile radius of Toronto. I don't know what that tells you, but that tells me that there's nobody on that panel who knows what northwestern Ontario's all about.

Mr Michlash: So what you're telling me is you feel he hasn't followed through on that commitment?

Mr Armstrong: On that commitment, he has appointed someone now, but there was never any official announcement of that person. I am still waiting to receive an official announcement of that person.

For northwestern Ontario, my point of view has always been that I want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. That's a part that I've presented in anything I've written to the ministers on behalf of NOMA, that we want to be part of the solution. That's what we want to be today: part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Mayor Armstrong, it's great to have you actually representing

NOMA as well as, of course, your second hat of mayor of Rainy River. It's important because I think one of the things that's not being recognized as quickly today is that we are talking about also the melding of two other ridings, essentially the Port Arthur and the Lake Nipigon ones. In essence, Lake Nipigon riding is disappearing.

I think I'm beginning to see what the problem is in terms of this government's absolute lack of understanding. We hear it through Mr Gilchrist. Obviously Mr Gilchrist doesn't think it's necessary for MPPs to meet with their constituents. Obviously he doesn't think, basically speaking, you need that. It's because he has a very different way of approaching his job and he does it on the basis that you can do it all by phone calls.

The fact is, I think it's really important for Mr Gilchrist and all the government members to recognize that the ridings do not belong to the MPPs. We are but mere temporary occupants of that position. The riding belongs to the people. The people up in northern Ontario determine that they want to meet with us, and we want to meet with them, so we certainly will drive those distances.

The fact is, the reason we are up here in Dryden — and we should be in other communities but you wouldn't let us do it — is so you can understand that better. To simply say, "Well, it's very nice to be here. We've been here before," you've got to recognize that if you wish to represent your constituents and you do it well, as we all do, we want to meet with them, they want to come down and see us, we want to go and see them and we insist on doing it. It isn't just cutting ribbons; it's getting involved in a variety of issues that are completely different from the issues that you clearly deal with.

I know that certainly representing the North Shore communities as well, Mr Armstrong, that's one of the concerns they have. This committee and some of these previous presenters are really quite saying that Lake Nipigon doesn't need a representative. They're willing to say that. They're saying that Kenora-Rainy River can do with one representative.

It's astonishing to listen to members from the north — of course they are members of the Conservative Party, and that may explain perhaps why they're doing this, although even that's beyond belief — that you would actually say, "We can not only make due, but we welcome less representation." I find that beyond belief. It's been difficult sitting here this morning listening to that when indeed we want and deserve more representation, not less. The least this government can do is maintain the level of representation. I hope they will still consider that.

Mr Armstrong: To comment on that, I think the point I'm trying to make is that, yes, we have technology and, yes, we can use the telephone, but we still need that personal interrelationship with our MPP, whether it's a Conservative, NDP or Liberal. In my job I try not to differentiate. I think that I have to try to represent everybody of all colours, all stripes. So I'm here not trying to impress anybody. I'm here to say keep the accessibility of people and consider the distances and the weather and all these things when you make your decision on accessibility.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you very much for your excellent presentation. It shows that you're representing northwestern Ontario in your presentation and also a lot of the views of northeastern Ontario.

I disagree strongly with some of the comments made by Mr Gilchrist, because the technology in a lot of areas — I don't know; I'm from northeastern Ontario, but there are a lot of communities and people out there who still have party lines: five, six, seven, eight people on party lines. They don't have the use of the fax machines, they don't have the use of the computers, because the capital dollars have not been spent there the same as capital dollars have not been spent for four-laning highways and making it accessible so that we could have better tourism, people coming through for tourism and just travelling around through northeastern and northwestern Ontario.

Then we see a silly campaign promise that was made for fewer politicians and we have Mike Harris and his Conservatives trying to ram it down the throats of everybody, especially in the geographical area where 87% of the population do not want this legislation being brought forward. But it's going to be brought forward, and from what I can hear in the presentations that I've listened to the day before this and today, the Conservative caucus members here are not going to listen to any amendments that are being brought forward. They're just going to bring this back into the Legislature, ram it into law, and it'll become law probably before the Legislature adjourns December 12. I'm just wondering what reaction you would have to this happening.

Mr Armstrong: Of course we'd be very disappointed, because we feel that personal representation is a right of every individual in Ontario. If that is changed, then I am disappointed.

As far as the technology is concerned, I was at a friend's house last night. He lives about 20 miles north of Barwick. It costs him \$60 a month to have a private phone. He runs a big business back there, a big farming business: \$60 a month just to have that private phone. You can get technology but the price is still heavy in northwestern Ontario.

But I want to go back to my first statement, that I want people to be people and to have access to people. I think that's what we want you to take back, the message from us: Please keep the people accessible to the people. We're not machines.

Mr Len Wood: People in northern Ontario take their politics very seriously. Talking from personal experience, having been elected the second time now to government, people want to see their local member of Parliament. They want to be able to talk to him. They want him to be able to sit down in groups and discuss their concerns and get feedback. They don't want to be able to do like Mr Gilchrist is saying: "We'll send a fax or we'll put it on the Internet. A telephone call is all that they deserve." In northern Ontario they take their politics a lot more seriously than that and they want the personal contact. I agree with you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Armstrong, for coming down from Rainy River and making your views known, and NOMA's views as well.

We will recess until 12:45 pm Dryden time, unless Mr Angus is here. Is Mr Angus here? We'll leave a note on the door for him. That's where we'll start this afternoon.

The committee recessed from 1115 to 1245.

CANADA'S NEW DEMOCRATS

The Acting Chair: Our first presenter is here. Mr Angus, welcome. I hope you got your car going. You have 20 minutes to use on your own, or if you end up short, we'll divide the time that's left equally.

Mr Iain Angus: Fair enough, Mr Chairman. If you could give me a 10-minute note in some way to let me know. Let me start by thanking the committee for its flexibility in dealing with my reality this morning.

Mr Gravelle: Hi, Iain.

Mr Angus: Hi, Michael. I can't very well accuse you of being late, Michael, given what's happened to me.

I also want to thank the committee for holding hearings here in Dryden rather than in Thunder Bay, which is more traditional, because, quite frankly, Thunder Bay won't be affected by this legislation. It's Kenora, it's Rainy River, in terms of the districts, it's Lake Nipigon, that other part of the Thunder Bay district that will have the greater impact.

Let me start by giving you a bit of my background, because I think it's relevant to my appearance today. Although I'm listed with my federal party president hat on, I chose that because it's a broader perspective than the fact that I'm the president of the provincial riding of Fort William and the president of the federal riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

From 1975 to 1977, I was the provincial member for the riding of Fort William, the riding now held by Lyn McLeod. From 1984 to 1993, I was the federal member of Parliament for Thunder Bay-Atikokan. So I've got the experience at both levels.

I'm currently operating as a transportation consultant and have done two contracts which have brought me throughout northern Ontario by road and a little bit by air, and actually have seen some of the communities that I had talked about, as both a provincial and a federal politician, but never had visited.

I come before you today dealing not so much with the big-P politics of this decision, of the decision by this government to adopt federal boundaries, but to try to give you a sense of what it's like on the ground.

My experience in getting here this morning is part of that. My original intention had been to bring in a large green garbage bag, put it on the desk beside me, which would include my big winter boots, my second parka, my ski pants, my toque, my mitts, the candles and the matches that are part of the kit that elected members have to carry with them through this region. Although today was my first accident, my good friend and colleague Howie Hampton has rolled his vehicle many times, has bushed his vehicle many times as he travels from community to community. It's just part of the way of life in the north, and so far I've come through unscathed.

When you're servicing at a provincial level — and I emphasize the term "servicing," because as an elected representative from this part of the world, you're more

than just a vote in the Legislature; you're the go-between between the people and the government of the day, no matter what stripe, whether it's Tory, Liberal or NDP or something that may arise in the future. You're the go-between.

The provincial level of government is much more in the face of everyday residents, and I don't mean that in a negative way. The Ministry of Natural Resources is referred to as "the ministry," because it controls so much of the lives of the people in northern Ontario. If you folks haven't already experienced it, wait until the first time there's a screwup in moose tags. You will know — certainly up here we will know — the impact on daily life, because that's important to people. The same thing with decisions on where offices are, where the conservation officers are. Many times as a federal member, sharing an office with the provincial member — Howie Hampton in Atikokan — I had to deal with provincial issues, because I was there on the spot and they wanted to talk to a politician to get a point across about what the ministry was doing to them or wasn't doing for them that particular week.

Health care, community and social services, workers' compensation are front-line issues, where people turn to their provincial member more often than they turn to their federal member. Let me give you a comparison between workers' compensation, a provincial issue, and unemployment insurance, a federal issue. When you have a workers' compensation constituent come into your office, they bring their life in a file folder, and you've got chapter and verse for five years, 10 years, 15 years that they've fought the bureaucrats and fought the system.

On the other hand, you can get a call about somebody who hasn't got their UI, and all you need is a social insurance number and a piece of paper giving you permission to access their UI file. It's fairly simple to respond to. You might get an answer they like, you might get an answer they don't like, but it's very easy to deal with through a telephone call. You don't have to see them face to face. But provincially, people want to look you in the eye and talk to you about the issue of the day that concerns them, whether it's something that has been created by the provincial government or whether it's something that's just in the provincial government's jurisdiction.

When you look at increasing the size of the ridings — and I've given you copies of the three federal ridings as they now stand, because there has been a change from what I ran on in 1993 and what others will run on next year or the year after, whenever the federal election is called — those are humongous pieces of property. If you look at the Kenora-Rainy River riding, you find Dryden on that map and you go north a couple of hundred miles and you take a block of land out of there that used to be called the Reed tract — it was a forest where there was incredible conflict back in the mid-1970s over whether or not it should be logged. I took that block of land, took the roadmap of Ontario and found that if you drew a line between Windsor and Toronto and a line parallel to that around Parry Sound, squared it off, that was the size of that one forest in northern Ontario.

If you extrapolate that to what that means in terms of the geography that has to be travelled in order to see people, to hear from them, to deal with them, it's an incredible distance. Whether it's Frank Miclash representing the riding of Kenora, Howard Hampton representing a smaller riding of Rainy River or Gilles Pouliot representing the riding of Lake Nipigon, those gentlemen — and it doesn't matter what party is in — have incredible distances to travel in order to see their constituents and be seen by them. By increasing the size of the ridings, you're taking away from the time that constituents have with their members.

Let's take a look at Thursday night. Frank or Howie or Gilles, coming out of Queen's Park at the end of the day, can get to Thunder Bay 8 o'clock, 8:30, something like that — I know there's a flight to Fort Frances around 9 o'clock. After four full days in the Legislature — and I don't care whether Howie's the leader or just an ordinary member, those days are full — you fly to Fort Frances or you get off in Thunder Bay and rent a car and drive the two hours to Atikokan overnight there, and it goes on and on like that for the rest of the weekend: trying to be in two places at once, even though they're 80 miles apart, 120 miles apart, 60 miles apart in terms of Lake Nipigon riding. That's time when you're not productive. Communities don't schedule things to accommodate you, by and large.

I gather there was some reference to members of the Legislature attending city council meetings. Well, most of them are on Monday nights. If you look at the new riding of Kenora-Rainy River, there are 50 reserves which all have band councils, there are I don't know how many other non-aboriginal communities. It would take you two years to do a cycle of getting to every municipal council. That's not good use of your time or good use of their time. It's better to focus on when there are issues where they need you and you can get in there and sit down with them and work it out.

I want to briefly touch on the winners and losers, and I'm not talking politics here, I'm talking communities. In Kenora-Rainy River, there will be no winner or loser unless the member who is elected has a family who lives in the riding. Then they will become the member for whatever community they live in, because that's where they're going to go back to — that's where the spouse is; that's where the kids are — or they're going to move them to Toronto.

In Thunder Bay, the new Thunder Bay-Atikokan and new Thunder Bay-Nipigon provincial ridings, the members will be from Thunder Bay. They won't be from Marathon, they won't be from Atikokan. I'm not being parochial here per se, but that's the reality. That's where the biggest lump of voters are. By forcing the merger of the Lake Nipigon riding with the old Port Arthur, you're disfranchising those smaller communities having the right to have an elected representative from their community just by sheer numbers.

I've represented one of the smallest ridings provincially in northern Ontario, one of the smallest ridings federally in northern Ontario, and those are very easily done. Atikokan is two hours away, and in fact for some part of the year it's on a different time zone. It's an hour

up and three hours back, so you can make an early meeting, but then you've got three hours on the road, in effect, in terms of when you get back home and get to bed. It's not as simple as just saying: "We'll adopt the federal boundaries. Everything will be hunky-dory." There will be impacts. People will be disfranchised. They will not see their member of the Legislature as often as they do now and, again, it doesn't matter who those people are or which parties they represent. It's just physically impossible to do.

One final note: Think about what you were doing on Remembrance Day, November 11, in your own constituencies and how many invitations you had to be at the cenotaphs. Some of you might only have had one; others might have had two or three within a reasonable geographic distance. But think about Frank Miclash. Where was he? Was he in Dryden at 11 o'clock and then made the rounds of the Legion in Kenora at 3? Or Howie Hampton trying to hit five communities all on that day? That's the reality that members of the Legislature have to deal with in northern Ontario in terms of being able to serve and be seen to serve their constituents.

I've got a lot more I can say, but let me leave the few moments for you folks to raise the questions you think are appropriate.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Angus. We have six minutes for questions that will start with Mr Gravelle.

Mr Gravelle: Thank you very much, Iain, for being here. I think it's very clear to all members of the committee that you're an extraordinarily important addition today because you represent somebody who has been there as a provincial member and as a federal member, and the examples you used were perfect. You're right, we could use a lot more time.

You made mention of the fact that you were glad the hearings weren't in Thunder Bay if Dryden was a choice, and I sure do agree. I would submit it would have been a good idea to have them in Geraldton as well or Longlac or Marathon because, in essence, the fact is that Thunder Bay specifically is not affected — you're right — but it will have an impact in that the new member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon, whoever that member may be, in order to do the job will be spending a great deal of time obviously in the other communities.

I just really want to say I think any opportunity we have to explain better, particularly to the members from southern Ontario, just what the realities are can only hopefully make a difference. I hope they take that into consideration. I want to thank you for making those points and wish you had more time to elaborate further.

Mr Angus: The committee might want to drive to Sault Ste Marie tonight instead of flying.

Mr Gravelle: There's an idea.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you, Iain, for coming forward and giving us your experience as a provincial member and a federal member. We've heard in some of the comments from the government members that people are not really that important, that you can put 100,000 or whatever there and people can serve them through faxes and telephones and cellular phones and this and that. They don't have to really be out there talking to them. We heard some of the comments from one of the Conser-

vative members, saying he might get eight people come in to see him on the weekend and the rest can be all done by telephone.

My point is, and I'm sure you want to comment on it, that northern Ontario politics are different than southern Ontario. They take it more seriously and they want to see their local member, whether provincial or federal; for example, you took the ditch today and I'm happy to see that you didn't hurt yourself as a result of it, but the roads are slippery a lot of the time, fog and one thing and another, and getting around. I'll let you make a comment on that.

Mr Angus: I can recall one occasion, and this is when we were in government in Ontario, that Howard Hampton, as the Minister of Natural Resources, was making some changes to stumpage fees and there was a major concern by the independent loggers. They just circled the office in Atikokan. They were able to get access to their member of Parliament, who was also the minister, to say, "Hey, Howie, do you realize that this is what the impact is on us because of it?"

They were able to affect public policy in a face-to-face way where they couldn't do it because of their language skills, because of the fact that they're in the bush for 12 hours a day and they're only home on the weekends and that's the only time they can talk to politicians, and they were able to reach Howie. I don't just mean Howie specifically. I'm sure Frank has experienced it and I know Michael, in his new career, has got a bit of that. I'm sure others have had that happen to them.

In northern Ontario it's really important to be able to see that politician to dialogue with them directly. You may not end up agreeing, but when the member casts their vote, the very least he or she will know is where the people affected by that issue will stand. You don't get the same sense from a fax or from a telephone call because, let's face it, folks, we all have staff. The staff are the ones who tend to handle the calls, to be on the receiving end, and will report to the member, but it's not the same as having a face-to-face go-at-it with a trucker or a logger or a day care worker where you can really see what they're talking about.

Mr Len Wood: I can vouch for the fact — I was with Howie during that tour — that people want to see you in person.

1300

Mr Young: I'd like to draw on your experience and ask your views on how we might increase the representation of the north in various other ways. What you said is true: The incumbents right now can't attend 26 municipal council meetings. They can't; it's impossible. Mr Miclash indicated he had seven invitations to cenotaph ceremonies on Remembrance Day. You can't. It's not possible right now.

There are a number of other areas of things we could do as government to increase representation and communication, because most of government is communication. One is the northern development offices, how they might be used better by local representatives, MPPs and MPs, to get the message down. Another is northern caucus meetings, which the Premier initiated and the federal Liberals attended. That's another.

Another, if you could comment, please, is the potential to use modern technology. We have two-way video technology that's coming on stream that can go over ordinary telephone lines. We could use that so constituents — not to replace the MPP, but to embellish the communication. There's also the possibility of additional staff or resources for MPPs in the north so they can get around a little better and have the resources to communicate better. Could you comment on those areas?

Mr Angus: Certainly the northern development offices over the years have provided a very valuable function, as has the Ombudsman's office. But there comes a time when people are more comfortable dealing with the elected representative.

Mr Young: I understand that it's not the thrust of your message, but with your experience — there are four ways that we could increase communication. Could you see how that might be helpful?

Mr Angus: Fair enough. Let me deal first of all with the high-tech stuff. Yes, that is a real option, but at this point in time it's only an option for those people who are in the educational field, the government field and perhaps the industries themselves. It doesn't work for the logger, the miner. We have individuals in this region who don't have telephones.

Mr Young: But certainly anyone can get access to a telephone at some time during the week.

Mr Angus: But a lot of these folks don't have access when you're available, in terms of your staff, your offices. It's Saturday, it's Sunday, it's late at night, after they've finished stripping down the rig and rebuilding it so they can work again on Monday. There are incredible stresses on folks. And I'm a junkie in terms of high-tech, so I'm speaking from a knowledge base. It doesn't work for everything. There are still things on which people want to see their member face to face. They don't buy in to the new technology.

Staff resources, of course. When I was elected we didn't have constituency offices. That was provided partway through my term in 1976 where we actually had money for offices and a staff. Subsequent to that, all of us pressured the government of the day to create the worker adviser to try and take the workers' compensation load off, out of our constituency offices. The same thing for the Ombudsman. Those are resources that were put in place to try and deal with the load. But as society becomes more fragmented, I think we're finding that the load on the constituency offices is even greater today than it was in spite of all those additional supports.

Mr Young: But what if you had more money for another constituency office in another community?

Mr Angus: Let's deal with that. Provincially, Frank has two: Kenora and Dryden. That leaves out Sioux Lookout, Ear Falls, Red Lake and the far northern reserves. Howie Hampton has one in Atikokan that I used to share with him, and another one in Fort Frances. At the very least, one would assume they would get to keep four, whoever the new member was. But that still leaves a whole bunch of the area out of touch. Federally, Bob Nault only has one; it's here in Dryden. Does that make it better?

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Angus, for coming today and presenting your practical and

unique views on your experience from your federal representation. We appreciate it.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mr Dick MacKenzie. You have 20 minutes, Mr MacKenzie. You can use it how you want.

Mr Dick MacKenzie: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, and thank you for being here, members. I bring greetings and apologies from our president, Dave Barker, of Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. He's in Geraldton and it would have required a 16- to 18-hour drive to be here, and my drive is only about three hours. I'm past president of the association and I come to greet you.

Frank Miclash is our member of provincial Parliament in this riding, and I fear for his health. When he first started here some years ago he was a robust man, he was a portly gentleman. He was all of these things. He has spent the last seven, eight years flying his own plane around here to some of the many reserves and remote communities, some of which have no roads, many of which have no road access to them at all. He has driven around the riding. He is now a shadow of his former — he's a skeleton. If this riding is expanded, I fear for the health of the person trying to represent it.

The new riding in this area being proposed is roughly the size of Newfoundland, with Labrador included. The new riding being proposed is roughly three times the combined land areas of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Or here, if we look south to another set of circumstances, the new riding being proposed is approximately the size of the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin, our two closest neighbours to the south, combined. It's an area with maybe 50 reserves, half at least of which have no road access. Many of the people there have no electricity, no running water. Some of those communities have one phone, one community phone in the whole community.

The new riding — I would like you to picture this — could entail a representative going from his constituents in Rainy River to his constituents in Fort Severn. That would entail about a 300-mile car drive, about five hours of driving, for instance, from Rainy River to Sioux Lookout, at which point he might catch a plane for the other 450 miles and three hours of flying to Fort Severn. A person wouldn't always go to those extremes, but this is one enormous riding. There are some who think it's the largest one as is, in Ontario, and that it may be too unwieldy for proper representation now.

NOACC believes this will make it an impossible feat for any member to adequately represent. With democracy and representation being the cornerstone of this province, we really believe that expanding the boundaries of these already huge ridings in this part of the country will make it impossible for the citizens here to have proper representation, and they do deserve it. We're composed of a very vibrant, rich native aboriginal culture, and we have many immigrants to this part of the world, who raise families, who work in the mines, the forest industry.

Mining contributes 30% of the mineral production of this whole country of Canada, and roughly 27% of the forest products. These are exportable products. Immigrants, residents who have lived here for many years, and increasingly the native populations are part of these enrichments to Ontario and to Canada and they deserve good, proper representation.

I'd like to leave some room open for questions and for those people to follow me. I don't have a lot more to say except to point out the enormity of the existing boundaries, the absolute impossibility of proper representation with even increased riding sizes in this part of the country. I'd like to say that NOACC thinks it'll be a sad day for the citizens in northwestern Ontario if these changes take place.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr MacKenzie. Our first question is to the New Democrats. Mr Wood, you have three minutes.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your presentation. We've now heard from the chambers of commerce for this particular region, that they're opposed to losing the democratic right of representation in the area, and we've heard from the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association that the fewer politicians bill is the wrong way to go. When you create ridings that are bigger than Italy, bigger than Spain, bigger than Germany, how are the people in the small communities going to get proper representation at Queen's Park for their way of life, whether it be education issues, whether it be health care issues, whether it be a number of other issues out there, whether it's the renewable resource issues, hunting and fishing, how are they going to be able to get representation one-on-one with their local member of Parliament?
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I've heard from one of the mayors in my riding, who is saying he's a Conservative by choice but he thinks it's very unfair for Mike Harris to keep slapping the people in northern Ontario by this particular bill and by all the reductions in the maintenance of roads and the funding for airports and the shutting down of an airline — just continuously one thing after another over the last 16 months, and now, to top it off, saying there are going to be fewer politicians in the area.

Do you really believe there are going to be amendments to this legislation by your presentation today and by listening to some of the comments that have been made up until now, since Bill 81 was introduced? I'll leave it at that, if you want to comment on it further.

Mr MacKenzie: Yes, sir, I believe this will be taken to heart or I wouldn't have driven three hours in this kind of weather to make this presentation and NOACC wouldn't have asked me to do that if we didn't think it would make a difference. I do think it'll make a difference. I do think it's important that we not only point out the enormity, the size and the difficulty of representing people here, but the diversity of the people.

I wasn't so inclined to draw comparisons between Italy and Spain, but let me draw one more comparison that I forgot to point out before. I superimposed a map of the proposed new riding of this part of Ontario over southern Ontario. There were some places that had to be tucked and I had to take in a little bit of Quebec to make it sort

of symmetrical, but the riding went from Windsor to Ottawa, up to Sault Ste Marie to Timmins and down the Quebec border to the US. It included Sudbury, North Bay and all those kinds of places. That's a little closer to home, I think, for an illustration than Italy and Spain and France might be. But to answer your question, yes, I think it'll make a difference. I am very confident that it will.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr MacKenzie, for taking the time to drive in to see us here today. One of the things that personally, and maybe I can speak for some of our other caucus members, I'm having trouble wrestling with is that so much of the presentation time has dwelt with the vast, less developed areas in the far north, if I can make that distinction. Less than 2% of the population in what's considered northern Ontario is north of the 51st parallel.

I have to ask you a very serious question. It's one thing to talk about access. It's my understanding that 49 of the 50 first nations communities you talk about have a fax machine and only one, North Spirit, doesn't; it has 247 people and has one phone, but they're the only community that doesn't have fax. And there's no doubt they deserve access to their member.

But where do you draw the line in terms of the responsibility we have to taxpayers? The suggestion has been made, perhaps not overtly, but a number of preservers and certainly a number of opposition members have alluded with some reverence to their perception that PEI has greater democracy because there's only one MLA for roughly each 4,000 people. If we followed that model, Ontario would need 2,750 MPPs, at \$400,000 to operate each member's office and budget.

Where do you draw the line in terms of the distinction you make between the access but the responsibility that we each have to have a reasonable workload? Do you have one member who serves everybody north of the 51st parallel? I would also ask you to respond: There are three members right now who go north of the 51st, and that will continue to be the case. The boundaries shift slightly, but again we're not talking a huge variation in population. If three members can serve it now, if three federal MPs serve it now and will serve it again in the future, what is so dramatically wrong with the particular boundaries that have been chosen in this? Where would you draw the line about how many people the member in the far north should be representing?

Mr MacKenzie: There probably are some models of different kinds of representation, but to focus simply on population — the question I would ask is, how can any person in good conscience in a democracy leave people unrepresented or severely underrepresented? That's really the case here. There might be models. It may take some innovative thinking, some innovative programs. As much as people hate to hear it, the States have two sets of representation. They have some that are represented by population and some represented simply by area.

Mr Gilchrist: But the hard numbers, as you look at the actual boundaries and the actual population, is that the federal, non-partisan commission that drafted these boundaries built in a 40% differential, even when you count the urban centres of Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie

and Sudbury — a 40% differential. Do you really mean to tell me that you think that isn't enough allowance for the different geography?

Mr MacKenzie: I don't understand the —

Mr Gilchrist: Forty per cent smaller than the — you said population isn't the only thing and I agree with you, but if you're doing a tradeoff against population, do you not think 40% differential was an accurate and adequate reflection of the increased demands that geography poses on those four ridings?

Mr MacKenzie: I'm sorry. I still don't quite understand what you're saying.

Mr Gilchrist: The population of all the northern ridings, on balance, the average population for each riding, is 40% less than those in southern Ontario. Clearly the boundary commission did build that into account and they did reflect the fact that it takes longer to get between towns. They have said, "We will give you a 40% smaller population base to make that consideration." Do you think it should be even more than 40%?

Mr MacKenzie: I don't even see it in those terms, sir. I see it as an inability to represent the people within an area. I'm talking about distances of eight hours between towns, in some cases. Those are extreme, but I'm talking about hours between towns. It's a very unproductive use of an MPP's time. I'm not even speaking federally. I'm not suggesting that they're doing a heck of a good job either serving such huge boundaries. I guess the assumption is that they are, but I am not certain that's the case.

Mr Miclash: Thank you for your comments. I appreciate your concern for my health. I have to say that it's been a little bit of work, but it's gone. Anyway, I think you've made a great contribution here. Both Iain and you have given an excellent representation on the geographic area. I think that's a major point that the members of the government are missing, the actual geography, and then combined with that are the requests for a good number of constituents to meet with us on a face-to-face basis.

Dick, you're with the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. They normally have an annual meeting with the Premier and the cabinet to discuss issues of the north. When was the last time that meeting took place?

Mr MacKenzie: It was two years ago. Last year was the first year in 43 years that the sitting government didn't meet with NOACC.

Mr Miclash: So last year was the first year in 43 years —

Mr MacKenzie: Since I believe 1952.

Mr Miclash: — 1952, that the provincial Premier and cabinet would not meet with the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. Let me bring a quote back to you. It was a quote in a document that we saw during the campaign. It was called A Voice for the North and it was a document compiled by the Conservative members of that time and endorsed by the Premier. It said in the document: "The people of northern Ontario have given us a clear message: Their needs and concerns are not being met by the provincial government. They feel left out of the decision-making process.... Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party are prepared to act." In your opinion, have they acted on what he said they were going to act on?

Mr MacKenzie: No.

Mr Miclash: No. Thank you.

Mr MacKenzie: No, I simply have to say no. I am speaking on behalf of an organization of many constituents. You've asked my opinion. My opinion is no, they haven't acted on it. It's the only government which has failed to even answer invitations. The Premier has failed to answer invitations to be our guest speaker at our annual meetings the last two years.

It is the first time since we started going to Queen's Park. I must say that it's closer for members from the western part of this riding to drive to Vancouver than it is to drive to Queen's Park, but we've gone there every year faithfully since 1952.

Mr Miclash: That's a good point. I would just like to echo your point that you made that it will be a sad day for the citizens of northwestern Ontario should redistribution happen. Again, I thank you for your presentation.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr MacKenzie, for coming in and making your views known to us today.

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THUNDER BAY COALITION AGAINST POVERTY

The Acting Chair: We go to our next deputants, the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty. Would you state your names for the record and give your positions or who's going to speak.

Ms Chris Mather: My name is Chris Mather. I'm the coordinator for the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty. Ms Beulah Besharah is our board president, and this gentleman is Andy Saxberg, one of our members and volunteers.

The Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty is a non-profit agency concerned about the depth and extent of poverty in our community. We provide public education on poverty and related issues, attempt to influence the policymaking processes which affect people with low incomes, operate a food bank, a drop-in centre and a good food box program. At this point I want to add that we are a non-partisan group. None of us has been a candidate for any party. Mike will tell you that we frequently try and affect the Liberal policies that are being made at the federal level, and when the NDP are back in power we're going to watch those guys to see what they do for low-income people.

In regard to that then, I hope you'll take my next comments in that light, that we're a non-partisan group. I feel that I have to make a comment about what happened this morning. When we heard that Mr Angus had gone into the ditch, one of the members of the Conservative Party made comments to the effect that it was similar to his philosophy being "in the ditch." I feel that something should be done. Somebody should find out which member said that and some censure should be made of his conduct.

We also want to say that we're very disappointed by today's hearings. It was a big deal for us to come up here. I got out my best suit, right? We closed our office for a day. We spent a lot of time on our presentation. This morning we again heard a Conservative member, and because of the TV camera we don't know which one

it was, making the comment that he was in favour of this bill. Now, we thought they were coming up to hear our opinions and then make their minds up. It would appear that they have come up with their minds made up, and that's very disappointing to us. I'll continue with the rest of my presentation.

We have great concerns about how the proposed changes to ridings will affect people in the north, and especially poor people in the north. Before we provide our specific concerns, however, we wish to address the process which is being used to make these changes.

Reducing northern representation at Queen's Park is a major change. When it was mentioned during the last election campaign that riding changes were being considered, we assumed that the process used to determine such changes would be open, intensive and involve the expertise of people familiar with the ridings under consideration. We envisioned extensive public consultation and a multiparty search for a consensus as to what was best for each riding. In early October we heard that Bill 81 was being presented as a fait accompli and would be passed without public hearings. We believe and wish to state firmly and for the record that this government should be ashamed that it was only after pressure from the opposition that it agreed to hold public hearings on the Fewer Politicians Act. We wish to be clear that we consider holding only three days of hearings in the north, a vast area encompassing 87% of Ontario which stands to lose one third of its MPPs, is a laughably transparent attempt to claim that public input has been solicited.

We were chagrined to learn that our hopes for a consensus approach to riding changes was neither naïve nor an unheard of concept in Canadian politics. We found reference to changes introduced by a Conservative Ontario provincial government in 1943 which received the approval of the opposition. We also found reference to a process used in New Brunswick which was supported by all the political parties and which used extensive public consultation. We want to know why the people of New Brunswick can have that kind of process and the people up here can't.

Turning now to our specific concerns about the plan for the north, we must first address the realities of being a northerner. Life up here is inescapably coloured by two factors: our geography and our climate. No decision about service in this area can be realistic unless it takes those two factors into account. We expect that this committee will hear about our geography and weather several times — and we know you've heard a lot already today, several times, about those two things — but perhaps repetition will bear fruit.

The proposed new riding of Kenora-Rainy River will be one third the size of Ontario. One person cannot service that area. It's very possible that some members of this committee represent ridings in which it is possible to telephone from one end of the riding to the other without incurring long-distance charges. Such members can be forgiven for not realizing that some parts of our region only have radio phone service. Radio phone charges are higher than groundline telephone charges.

Also, as at least one cabinet minister has been made aware, the cellular telephone network does not extend

over much of northwestern Ontario. Therefore, even for such a simple thing as a phone call to a constituency office, costs can be higher in the north than in other parts of the province. This is a consistent reality of life in the north. The proposed riding changes will only exacerbate this difficulty. As an anti-poverty group, we know only too well that this difficulty is worse for low-income people.

This committee must take into account that deciding upon the boundaries of a riding should not be based solely upon the size of that riding's population. That is just too simplistic. The level of service provided by the member will depend on the distance to be travelled to each community within the riding. In the north, of course, during the winter months travel depends upon the weather. It's by no means unusual for the Trans-Canada Highway to be closed, and even when it's open there are advisories about reducing speed. Serving a northern riding in winter is not the same as getting on the subway in Toronto.

Our home community is in the Port Arthur riding, to which it is proposed to add nine additional communities and seven Indian reserves. These communities and reserves are distinct from each other and from Thunder Bay, both in terms of their demographics and their service needs. Many of these communities, as is true throughout the northwest, have very high levels of poverty, an unstable or one-industry economic base and low levels of in-town services. They deserve and need considered and extensive attention from their provincial representative.

From Thunder Bay to Marathon, the next distant community in the proposed riding, is approximately 310 kilometres. The citizens of our riding will experience a decrease in service from their MPP if its boundaries are enlarged. Consider if the member tries to spend just two days per year in each of the new communities, which isn't a high level of service. The member will be absent for 30 days more per year from Thunder Bay, and that's a significant figure given that the member's already absent four days a week when the Legislature is sitting.

It is planned that the new ridings will match the boundaries of the federal ridings. It appears to us that this ignores the basic and profound difference between the two jobs of member of Parliament and member of provincial Parliament. The kind of programs and services administered by the provincial government have a more immediate effect on the day-to-day lives of the average citizen than do those provided by the federal government. MPPs are called upon to act as advisers, advocates and even a form of ombudsman for their constituents. Everything from northern travel grants to workers' compensation to highway maintenance complaints are brought to the MPP. Without in any way wishing to downplay the importance of a federal MP, we must ask, how often does one apply for a passport? How concerned is the average citizen with Seaway issues?

Over my 15 years as a social worker, I have never advised a client to approach a federal MP for help with a problem, and I estimate that I've referred people to a provincial MPP at least a dozen times a year. During the last six months, such referrals have included a disabled woman whose hydro was to be disconnected because her

provincial social assistance cheque was delayed. That poor woman spent a whole day in Mrs McLeod's office getting things straightened out. Another example is an elderly woman who required financial assistance to accompany her husband to Ottawa, where his heart surgery was scheduled. This is one of those ladies who has a great deal of problems with her lungs and she wanders around with an oxygen tank. Mr Gravelle's office introduced her to a program through which she could receive donated frequent flyer points. Most recently, we've had a woman whose child support cheques had not arrived. We've had no success with that one yet.

Just yesterday we referred somebody who again is having problems with social assistance to Mr Gravelle's office. Her child's teeth have been broken, her cheque has been held up, and the child is in considerable pain from the poor dental care they're receiving. Another example yesterday which we referred to Mrs McLeod's office was a woman who's having her hydro cut off in Marks township, which is just outside Thunder Bay. She doesn't even have any wood to keep her wood stove going.

It's important that this committee not make the mistake of thinking that adequate service can be provided by telephone. The types of problems we see brought to members' offices involve extensive paperwork and records which need to be reviewed before deciding what can happen on the situation. As an anti-poverty group, we're too well aware that poor people are intimidated by bureaucracies, especially in light of the current climate of poor-bashing, and need face-to-face contact with a member or their constituency workers in order to be able to explain their situation.

Indeed, since the cuts to social assistance, many of the poor people with whom our group comes into contact can no longer afford a telephone at all, or else they have a toll-denial feature on their phone which makes it so that they can't make a long-distance call. They can't even call a 1-800 number. That's real. That's not something I'm making up. In my work I have difficulty contacting poor people simply because many of them no longer have access to telephones.

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Travel within the new, larger ridings will be difficult for poor people. Again, Marathon is the farthest community away from Thunder Bay in the new riding. The return bus fare from Marathon to Thunder Bay is \$81.11. Please listen to this statistic carefully: It's \$81.11, a return bus fare. That's 42% of the maximum this government allows a single adult on social assistance for food, clothes, laundry, transportation and personal care per month.

So far we've been concerned with the member of provincial Parliament as a service provider to the individual constituent. The other role we see for our members is as advocates for the region as a whole. The north has a different culture, different problems, different needs and a different economy. We need and expect our representatives to communicate for us to the south. Certainly there's a belief up here that, even with the number of representatives we have now, the south doesn't listen to or understand our concerns. Taking away one third of our access to the decision-making will further lessen the

understanding at Queen's Park of our needs and our problems. We believe that relevant decision-making depends upon adequate information.

In summation, the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty is opposed to the riding changes as outlined in Bill 81. We believe that the increase in size of some northern ridings will effectively disfranchise part of the electorate. Service provision by MPPs will deteriorate, as will the north's ability to have a voice at Queen's Park. If redistribution of ridings is believed to be necessary, and we're not denying that maybe some change is necessary, we call upon the government to institute a comprehensive, multiparty approach to riding changes, an approach based upon consensus and extensive public input, an approach predicated upon achieving a system of ridings based upon the needs of the electorate. We believe that it is incumbent upon a government with such a large majority to ensure that major changes to the electoral system be carried out in as democratic a fashion as possible. Thank you for your attention to our presentation.

Mr Young: I'd like to ask you a question related to our provincial community because it's something every member of Parliament struggles with every day. We have a monstrous provincial debt of about \$100 billion; 17 cents of every dollar the province takes in, from all sources, goes to pay just interest on that debt. It's about \$8 billion a year. That debt is increasing this year another \$8 billion. It's a growing threat to everything we hold dear in our communities, whether it's the north or the south. I just wondered if you recognize the seriousness of this debt and this deficit and if you could recommend how to address it or where else we might make reductions in spending, because we're looking at everything to make that happen.

Ms Mather: Certainly. Probably the most important suggestion I would have for you is that you not borrow any more money to fund your tax cut to the most wealthy in this province. That's my answer.

Mr Young: That's the extent of your answer?

Ms Mather: That's the extent of the answer, yes.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll be very brief. I have just two comments arising from your presentation. First off, you remarked about something you'd heard from one of the members on our side. I hope you didn't come here suffering under the delusion that, considering they've already voted against in second reading, the other side is here with an open mind.

I have to comment on something else. I don't know what the source of your information is, but I must say it's completely untrue. I don't know why you seem to think it was the opposition that forced these hearings. As the person the House leader asked to take carriage of this bill, before the first House leaders' meeting, I made it clear that I wanted public hearings.

Let me just say for the record that this is the first time when the House is in session in 10 years. The Liberals never did it. The NDP never took a committee on the road in 10 years to have public hearings while the House was during its normal legislative session. The opportunity and the idea originated with the government because we want to hear concerns, constructive, useful suggestions. We don't need rhetoric but we appreciate the submissions we get up here and we take them to heart.

I would appreciate if something a little more balanced, in terms of an approach to some of this information, were taken before you so readily slam our government, as you have in your preface in this.

Ms Mather: What was the question, Mr Gilchrist? I didn't hear.

Mr Gilchrist: It was a comment.

Ms Mather: Okay.

Mr Gravelle: Thanks, Chris, Beulah, Andy. It's great to have you here.

Mr Gilchrist, if I could just quickly comment to him, you were certainly quoted quite audibly on CBC Radio saying you didn't expect any changes from these committee hearings.

Mr Gilchrist: I said, "Boundary changes."

Mr Gravelle: The point is, if you're here to listen, you can well listen to the details that were put forward by the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty, who very much have given a different angle in terms of how it's affecting people who simply can't access the services. I am very grateful, because you went into some great detail and covered a lot of the areas.

One of the things that was talked about earlier was, and I think it was mentioned, actually, by Mr Gilchrist previously, where do you draw the line? For Mr Young to basically talk about the debt and deficit, your response was absolutely correct. They're going to take \$5 billion a year from revenue to fund their tax cut.

In terms of drawing the line, it seems to me an appropriate amendment that could come forward would be to maintain the level of representation we now have in the north. Many of us would certainly argue that it's not enough as well, but certainly if the government wished to support that, based upon what they've been able to hear, I take it you would probably accept the fact if they maintained the number of ridings in northern Ontario, which would still be a very small percentage of the House.

Ms Mather: Yes, what we're asking for is that it be maintained as it is and not made worse. I know when I mentioned the tax cut Mr Young just dismissed what I said as being a party line. I want to reiterate that if the Liberals or the NDP were to introduce such a measure we'd be going after them too, Mr Young. It's the policy, not the party that we're after, okay? Thank you, Michael.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Do you see this bill as changing the fundamentals of democracy, at least in terms of northern Ontario?

Ms Mather: I'm speaking as an advocate for low-income people. I think one of the things about democracy is that for low-income people, for the poorest people in society, it's very hard to get access to the political process. Because they don't have a lot of money to spend and they don't contribute to campaigns they get discouraged enough and they don't even vote. One of my big tasks is to try to get them to vote for any party. Because of that, they're already disfranchised. Cutting down the number of people they can go to is going to disfranchise that group even more. I'm trying to speak as a low-income advocate here.

Mr Hampton: If the government were to design a process that actually considered people's views, in other

words a consultative, consensus-seeking process that actually went out and spent a fair amount of time seeking the views of people across the province, what do you think that process would look like, in your view? How would you design that process, since I think we are dealing with one of the fundamentals of democracy here?

Ms Mather: I think a process like that would have to be very user-friendly. I'm just speaking for the group we represent, the section of the population we represent. Low-income people are intimidated by people like you, even by people like Mike, by people who try to be really friendly; they find them intimidating. It needs time spent. It needs to be introduced in easily understood language. We try to take the stuff we get about politics and translate it into an easier-understood format. A process like that would have to happen.

We've presented at a lot of hearings. Quite often during the breaks Conservative members will come to me and say, "We do have concerns about low-income people," and I always make the offer to them, "Well, if you really want to know what low-income people think about things, if you are concerned about that, give me a call and I can arrange for you to talk to some low-income people." I can invite you to our food bank. Since the cuts to social assistance we have probably about 600 people going through our food bank every month. Nobody has ever taken me up on that — NDP, Liberal, Conservative. Mr Young, really I'm not a party person. Nobody takes me up on that.

Mr Young: We all have low-income people in our ridings, we all have food banks.

Mr Hampton: Excuse me, I thought it was my time, Chair.

I want to correct something that Mr Gilchrist said. You see, ordinarily committees don't sit while the Legislature is sitting. Ordinarily committees will sit during January, February and March, when the House is not sitting. That way you have a fair amount of time to actually consider bills and discuss them. The reason we're only having three days of hearings on this in northern Ontario and one in southwestern and one in southeastern Ontario is that the government has said they want this passed before Christmas. They don't want any further hearings. They don't want two or three weeks of hearings on it during the January, February, March period when those kinds of hearings would ordinarily be accommodated.

Mr Gilchrist: Why did your subcommittee member vote for it too?

Mr Hampton: We recognized these were the only hearings we were going to get.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Mather, for coming in. Have a safe trip back to Thunder Bay, although I think you have another presentation later.

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FLORENCE BUFFINGTON

The Acting Chair: Could we have Florence Buffington come and make her presentation to the committee.

Ms Florence Buffington: There might be a few additions to my presentation as it goes along. It's a good thing I didn't spend too much time doing this because I'd be off on tangents by now.

I'm Florence Buffington and I consider myself lucky to live in the Rainy River riding, where our MPP is Howard Hampton. It is also one of the ridings that Harris wants to do away with.

I've watched on TV as Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act, has unfolded over the last few weeks. This government is simply not listening to the NDP and Liberal MPPs when they speak of the negative consequences the passage of Bill 81 will have on their constituents.

When you speak of fair representation, please be kind enough to remember that everyone in Ontario is not a Conservative, and not all Conservatives believe in this venture. Residents of northwestern Ontario expect our MPPs to attend many different functions, as I'm sure all of you attend. These range from weddings, funerals, meetings with town councils, agricultural, forestry and tourist groups, Ducks Unlimited, agricultural fairs, social agencies, first nations, hospital boards, and the list could go on and on. Each of these groups wants and deserves time with its MPP. I think something that has been forgotten about in this process is that we are the people. You are the servants of our wishes and our views. That's what you decided to do for a job, and we want time with you.

These functions, meetings etc are vital in communities like ours. It makes the people of northwestern Ontario feel closer to and part of the legislative process to know and be known by our MPPs, that we have a direct link to the provincial government and that our issues are considered to be important to Ontario.

This sense will be impossible under Bill 81. How can one person be able to know and be known in an area that is one third of Ontario's land mass? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize this is an impossibility.

Bill 81 has nothing to do with mirroring the federal government boundaries. There is a hidden agenda of giving more power to urban Ontario at the expense of rural Ontario. The Conservatives know this and they are counting on the political gains they will make by providing suburban Toronto — Brampton, Mississauga, York, Scarborough and the like.

Gone will be the days here in the north when you will see your MPP at a local function, because in this riding it means going from an area of 33,000 square kilometres to an area of 360,000 square kilometres. How will the MPP for this area give adequate representation when there will be no physical way to do it? Not everyone has access to fax machines, e-mail, or wants them. We still want to see a living, breathing person.

The government rhetoric is the savings, savings, savings; just less staff, fewer offices, less, less, less. The fact is, Conservative spokespersons have stated in the media that, at most, \$1 million will be saved per year. There will be no savings on travel, mailouts, phone and fax. The MPP will still need to travel to outlying areas. The residents of these areas will expect to be heard from and see their MPP, which they should. Staff at constituency offices are still going to have to help the constituents. Additional staff will need to go into existing offices, if not branch offices open up.

I suspect from the way these changes will affect rural Ontario the intent is to give urban Ontario more power

over rural Ontario. To place population as the means for representation and to neglect other demographic factors is wrong. We keep hearing, "Move on, join the global economy" etc. Well, using population as a determining factor is from the old school of thought.

There are many aspects within Ontario that Harris and the Conservatives will have to address. In northwestern Ontario there is a higher ratio of seniors. To be fair, should some have to move out of this area? There are more trees in northwestern Ontario. Does this mean they'll need to be uprooted and shipped down east? We'll have more lakes in the riding with these changes. What should we do with the excess water? By now, you're thinking, how dumb is this woman? Well, these comments are as dumb as Bill 81.

Combining Rainy River, Kenora and part of the Lake Nipigon riding will increase the number of first nations in one riding from 11 in Rainy River to almost 50. How can this help first nations? With the complex concerns first nations face, this proposed change will hinder their ability to be heard at the Legislature, or is this another hidden part of the Conservative agenda? If anything, the provincial government should be looking at increasing the representation at Queen's Park for northern and rural Ontario.

I have a solution for the Conservative members to take back to cabinet. There will be a municipal election in November 1997. At that point in time the government could hold a referendum on the issue of redistribution. A straightforward question similar to this could be asked: Do you believe the boundaries for the provincial riding should be the same as the federal ridings? Yes or no.

I realize this leaves the first nations out of this process, but a separate referendum could take place on the reserves or the actual vote could take place on a separate ballot at the provincial election and let it be a majority, 50% plus one, that decides if there is change to the ridings.

Yes, I understand this holds off the process but since in the last provincial election the Conservatives did not have 50% plus one of the popular vote and since population is used under Bill 81, then the bill is already flawed. Let the voice of Ontario be heard on this major issue. There would still be enough time before the next provincial election to implement the changes if the people decide, not the people sitting down in Queen's Park decide, but the people.

I honestly believe our riding will end up with a nameless, faceless representative who is asked to represent all communities and all first nations in an area almost the size of Sweden. The fact is that this nameless, faceless individual will see many communities and many first nations fall through the representation cracks and many people will begin to wonder why we have provincial representation or, for that matter, a provincial government.

If the provincial ridings mirror the federal ridings, why not give all control back to the government of Canada and simply become one big city — Toronto?

1350

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Buffington. The first questions, we have two minutes each.

Mr Miclash: Florence, thank you for your presentation. You've touched on something that I mentioned this morning and I would like to get your comments on it as well. We know there's a federal boundaries commission that took a very close look at how the federal government would lay out its boundaries in terms of the various population areas in Canada, whether it be the east coast, whether it be the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, or even northwestern Ontario. Would you see much use in a provincial commission taking a look at the boundaries of Ontario?

Ms Buffington: If it's a commission that is really going to listen to people and that people will actually have input into it. I know myself today I drove up from Fort Frances, and that's 200 kilometres away. When I leave here, it's another 200 kilometres back, and I considered that this hearing was close enough so that I could even attend it. Where are the people from Fort Severn? Where are the people from all the other areas who won't have the opportunity to even be at something like this today?

Mr Miclash: You're correct. Another issue that I brought forth this morning was something that was raised in a Queen's Park report, and I'm sure you've seen some of these in your riding from Howard. It's a Queen's Park report from Morley Kells, a government member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore. In here he says that Queen's Park power is centralized in the Office of the Premier, Mike Harris, and very little is shared with the cabinet. I think that's a unique quote coming from a government member.

My question around that is: Do you see some of the power, or even more power, going into lobby groups if this legislation should go ahead?

Ms Buffington: I suspect from what has happened with the tax breaks and the other things like that that somebody definitely has the ear of the government. It's not the poor, it's not the people — we know who it is. It's big business.

Mr Hampton: Thank you for taking the time to be here today, Florence. The government members take the position that since these proposed constituency boundaries are okay for the federal level, then without any further thought they must be equally okay at the provincial level. Part of what bothers me about that, and you've talked about it here and the other deputants talked about it as well: in my experience, provincial members deal with things like health care, education, streets and roads, condition of our highways, sewer and water, whether or not people can get birth certificates, whether or not they've got a health card, whether or not they get their student loan or whatever. In effect, these are issues that touch people on a almost day-to-day basis. You've said you want access to political representation where you can actually, from time to time, meet the person, talk to the person. How important is that in those kinds of issues?

Ms Buffington: It's very important, especially when you're deciding to vote, who you should even vote for. If you never see the person, how can you possibly know if they're taking care of your representation needs at the time or not. I know in our area we're very lucky to see Howard, and yet you still hear, "He's never in the

riding." Well, he's probably in Emo or Rainy River or wherever. The same goes for Frank in his riding. I'm sure he hears that from people all the time too.

The ridings are so big you can't — unless you're going to get whoever is the next MPP Superman's cape and they can jump up and fly around and go from this place, it's not going to happen; it isn't that way. You're stuck by bus schedules, road conditions. Look what happened today to people on their way here.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you very much for your presentation. We've heard a lot about the size of the ridings and in fact that it will be very difficult for the member to get around and to represent the constituents or to be seen by the constituents as well as they presently are.

But in your presentation you also mentioned that the restructuring will require more staff in the constituency office to deal with the more constituents one will represent. I guess I have some concern. Recognizing I suppose that the function of the constituency staff is to deal with the complaints or the concerns coming into the office that are presently arriving by phone, fax or whatever method, generally the number is not people who walk in the front door in my southern Ontario office, and I expect that's somewhat similar in northern Ontario. Would the amount of work that's being done in a constituency office not relate to the number of population in the riding as opposed to how far away the calls are coming from?

Ms Buffington: I'm sure Frank's offices take care of many concerns and complaints or inquiries, the same as Howard's office does or Gilles Pouliot's — his too, his clerk. Those people are still going to need to get in touch with somebody. If the staff is busy taking somebody else's call, you need more people to deal with those issues.

Mr Hardeman: From a constituency office point of view, if one represents 100,000 people, on a percentage basis, and we'll just use a percentage of 10% because it's easy figuring, 10% of the people are going to require some help from the constituency office. In my southern Ontario riding of 100,000 people, my constituency staff is going to have to look after 10,000 people who need some assistance. If you lower that amount of population, would the number of calls not, in your estimation, also go down comparatively? Do the people in northern Ontario need more help from their members than the southern Ontario people?

Ms Buffington: It might very well be that down east where people are closer to specific agency offices they go into those offices, let's say for getting a passport or for doing whatever they need, death certificates, birth certificates, things like that. They might actually have an office agency that they can go in and receive those things where in this neck of the woods those offices are being closed down all the time.

It still might be that the regional office for most things around here was in Thunder Bay or the Kenora area, so people in Fort Frances didn't even know sometimes where to go to. So that call they might be making or going in with that inquiry to the MPP's office might be if they'd known exactly where to go before, they could have gone to that place initially.

Mr Hardeman: Just as a final point, in your estimation, on a percentage basis would the people in northern Ontario contact their MPP more than people in southern Ontario?

Ms Buffington: I wouldn't have access to that information. I'm sure Mr Miclash or Mr Hampton could tell you how many calls they get into their offices. I don't have that information.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Buffington, for coming and making your views known to us today.

KENORA BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Acting Chair: The next deputants are from the Kenora Board of Education, Mr Carrie and Mrs Helash.

Mrs Marion Helash: We would like to thank the members of the legislative committee on general government for this opportunity to present our views on the proposed reduction and redistribution of provincial ridings. The issue is very important to Ontarians living in the north, and we trust that our brief comments will be given careful consideration. We will address some general issues of concern which will no doubt be repetitive for you here today, as well as issues of particular concern to us as school board trustees and staff.

At the outset, we want you to know that we understand the fiscal situation in the province today. We understand what a difficult task it is to balance Ontario's need for government services and representation with the need to get our fiscal house in order. We are particularly concerned with the needs of northern Ontarians, as we're sure you can understand. The question which needs to be addressed today is whether the proposed redistribution of provincial ridings will help us or hinder us in achieving that balance.

In order to properly represent the wishes of his or constituents, a member of provincial Parliament must be able to make contact with those constituents in a meaningful way, on a regular basis. The ability to represent constituents in a riding is in part a function of the total population in that riding and is in part a function of the geographic size of that riding and the distribution of constituents within that riding. The principle of representation by population must be tempered in practice by geographic reality. There are numerous obstacles to effective representation in the north, such as the distance between communities, the lack of transportation infrastructure and alternatives, and the lack of advanced communications technology.

1400

We believe that ridings in geographically large but sparsely populated areas should contain smaller populations than the ridings in more densely populated areas. The proposed federal riding which our school board jurisdiction would fall into would be Kenora-Rainy River riding, which we have heard encompasses one third of Ontario's land mass. We do not see how one MPP can effectively represent such a large area when the issues and concerns are focused so much more at the local level than for a federal MP.

We do not foresee an immediate financial benefit to a realignment of provincial ridings with federal ridings.

Unless the province is prepared to live with the vagaries of federal election timing, we will still need separate enumeration processes. We have yet to see evidence that a permanent voters' list can be maintained on an ongoing basis at less expense than the current cyclical process.

Provincial MPPs must monitor the impact of provincial policies on individuals and local organizations, such as school boards. We depend on our local MPP to be familiar with the condition of our schools, the nature of our programs, and the social and economic conditions in our community. We depend on our local MPP to represent our interests to the government of the day. In the proposed Kenora-Rainy River riding, our school board would be competing with many other northern school boards for the attention of one overworked MPP, while in the south some school boards would have the luxury of one or more MPPs dedicated solely to their jurisdiction. We are concerned that our needs will not get the attention they deserve.

The last provincial election polarized the province along north-south lines. There are no members of the governing party in the north, as we define it. The proposed reduction in representation for northern Ontarians would further alienate us from our government.

Will the reduction in the number of MPPs prove to be a false economy? We know that the cost of our political representatives is a tiny fraction of the total cost of our provincial government. Our MPPs may be the best bargain in government, after school trustees and municipal councillors. They are all watchdogs of the public purse elected to serve the best interests of taxpayers. We believe taxpayers in the north would be willing to pay a tiny bit more in taxes to ensure their voices are still heard far away in Queen's Park. We ask that you soften the blow to northern Ontario as you redraw the electoral map. Thank you for listening to our presentation.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Helash. We have 15 minutes, 5 minutes to each caucus. This time we start with the government.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you. I appreciate your presentation here before us today. A couple of things to start out with that haven't been dealt with so far today in any of the hearings. I would suspect, as the chair of the board and someone who is as much a part of the democratic process —

Mr Hampton: Chair, could I interrupt for a minute? The first presenter that I remember was the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty, and I believe the government started off first. Then there was Florence Buffington, and I believe the Liberal caucus started off first. Now we're on the Kenora Board of Education, and if there's a rotation I believe we would come next.

The Acting Chair: Sorry. Please accept my apologies.

Mr Hampton: We are supposed to be following a rotation, aren't we?

The Acting Chair: This northern air has got me all up and down, Mr Hampton.

Mr Hampton: It seems to do that to a lot of government members.

Interjection.

Mr Hampton: You are right; it will be very temporary for some of you, Terence.

The Acting Chair: My apologies. Go ahead. We have five minutes.

Mr Hampton: I wanted to ask you this: You pointed out that in fact there are many boards of education, many communities spread across the map in northern Ontario. For example, one MPP may have to deal with six or seven boards of education and represent their views at Queen's Park, or one MPP may have to deal with a diversity of municipalities and have to represent their views at Queen's Park. I think you have an excellent point there. You should be aware that in the next stage in this, the government may also do away with your board of education and your municipality.

Mrs Helash: We are very aware of that, thank you.

Mr Hampton: Yes. You draw attention again to the difference between being a federal MP and a provincial member of the Legislature. I wrote down some of the things a federal MP would ordinarily deal with in their work at Ottawa: issues of defence, issues of foreign affairs, issues of international trade, issues of inter-provincial government relations, issues of the Constitution and so on. I want to ask you: Do any of those things, in your mind, touch people on a day-to-day basis?

Mrs Helash: No, they don't touch anybody really on a day-to-day basis. They're generalized.

Mr Hampton: You come from the Kenora Board of Education so you have been involved in local government of one kind or another. What are the things that touch people on a day-to-day basis, that people want to know about urgently, that their health may be in jeopardy etc? In your mind, what are the things that touch people on a day-to-day basis and often require closer representation, closer accountability and so on and so forth?

Mrs Helash: Education and health.

Mr Hampton: What disturbs me about this is that on the very things that matter most to people, as you say, education and health — how is the health care dollar going to be spent? Is our hospital going to be closed? Is it going to be downsized? How is the education dollar going to be spent? One of the things that worries me about this bill is, on those very issues that concern people the most, I would argue this government is going to increase the distance between the citizen and their elected representative, is going to increase the distance between the citizen and, eventually, their government. Do you think that's a good thing?

Mrs Helash: No, it's not. It can't be a good thing because we're a democratic country. If we're a democratic, we have a right to a voice and we have a right to a voice that will be heard.

Mr Hampton: I am not someone who is opposed to redistribution. I believe that every 10 years or so we should look at the electoral map and we should decide on how people are being represented. But in my view the representation of people and how people are impacted by that representation goes to the heart of democracy. It's what democracy is all about. If we're going to have redistribution, how do you think it should be carried out? Should there be a committee that spends a lot of time in communities? Should it just be a bill like this? How do you think redistribution or proper representation ought to be considered and dealt with?

Mrs Helash: I would think it would have to be an issue that's well thought out, that's dealt with within the communities, and that we get advice from people who work and live within them, like our representatives in our area. I would suggest that you and Mr Miclash would be very good at knowing exactly how long it takes and how hard you have to work to meet with your constituents.

Mr Gilchrist: We'll start again. I appreciate Mr Hampton going first, because I'd like to not so much rebut, but he cited a number of federal issues. I would agree that the ones he read out probably wouldn't touch anyone anywhere in this province, never mind northern Ontario. But I wonder whether you would feel the same thing about Agriculture and Food Canada, all the food inspection that's done in this country; veterinary inspection; everything to do with the Young Offenders Act and Victims' Bill of Rights; everything to do with citizenship and immigration — Ontario gets over half of the immigrants that come to Canada and clearly that impacts us; native educational programs and all the issues under native affairs, as we've heard numerous times today, obviously would be a big factor of life in this riding, both the existing one and the new one; all the income security programs, Canada pension plan, employment insurance, and on and on and on. Would you agree with me that those sorts of issues do in fact touch every community across Ontario?

Mrs Helash: And certainly in the immigration field and the native education field, it really impacts on boards of education.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes, I'm sure it does. I, for one, am not out to vilify MPs, and I'm not suggesting the other side is either. I think they have a full day's work on their plate. While I may not agree with all their decisions at the end of each day, I have not met any that I think are not giving value to the taxpayer.

1410

I want to talk about something else very briefly. Mr Hampton raised the issue of going out and consulting on redistribution. I really would like your comment on this, as I prefaced my earlier comments, as somebody who is just as much a part of the democratic process as any of we elected officials. I'm wrestling here with perhaps the greatest philosophical problem when we're dealing with this bill. In May 1994, before the federal government had even completed — in fact, literally the same week; they had just start their consultation process on boundary reform — we said, as part of our election campaign, as part of a promise we were making, that we would adopt federal boundaries. There was no doubt. The federal boundaries at the time in the north were 11 seats. Yes, they've changed to 10 but it would have absolutely gone from 15 to 11. We made that a promise.

Over a year later, 13 months later, the voters in this province had a chance, having read the Common Sense Revolution, to cast their vote, and I'd like to believe the average voter does pay attention to what all three parties have to say. So having considered all of those things, they cast their vote.

Now as the government, my problem is that there's a suggestion, obviously, from those who would say not to do this, that we break that promise. I would be the first

to agree that it affects different parts of the province in different ways. The workload for a Metro Toronto member is very different. I may have more people; they have more driving up in the north. I accept that. But that was a promise we made, and people had the ability to weigh all those factors and at the end of the day they cast their vote and we formed the government.

Do you believe it would be appropriate, having promised the electorate, having won the 82 seats we won, that we would now break that promise and not deliver on the reduction of MPPs and show the leadership at the same time that we're going to municipal councils and saying, "You've got to share in the belt tightening," somehow exempting ourselves from the belt tightening and the requirement that we're going to have to work harder and work smarter?

Mrs Helash: You promised not to cut classroom spending.

Mr Gilchrist: That's an excellent point, and your budgets were reduced 1.78%. We haven't cut any class sizes. I think you would agree with me on that. We have made no decision that affected a single school anywhere in this province. The school boards did that. Balancing all the competing factors, we didn't cut a class.

In deference to Mr Stewart, I pass it on.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I'm interested and really intrigued by your last comment suggesting that it's a tiny fraction of the cost. That's \$11 million a year. I think that's not necessarily a tiny fraction. But the one that intrigues me more says "to pay a tiny bit more in taxes." If you pay more in taxes I believe you're taking money out of the north as well. I guess what we've said all along is that the people of Ontario have been taxed enough. I think one of the problems is that past governments, boards, associations, whatever, tended to try and solve their problem by raising taxes, and I don't believe the people of Ontario are ready for that at the moment. It was just more of an intriguing comment that you made. Any comment about tax increases?

Mr Dean Carrie: Just a couple of quick comments: There may be a tax increase if we have to keep the same number of MPPs, but I think the role of those MPPs is to look out and look after the bureaucracy and make sure we can deliver government services as efficiently as possible. Our concern is, if you reduce the number of MPPs, you reduce the effectiveness of that watchdog role over the bureaucracy.

Mr Stewart: But why would that raise taxes? You said that if you have fewer MPPs we may have to raise taxes. Why would that be when we're looking at the cost factor of MPPs going down?

Mr Carrie: I don't know what's been used to come up with the estimates of the cost saving associated with the reduction in the number of MPPs. I think a lot of costs are not going to go down even though you reduce the number of MPPs. A comment was made earlier: What's going to happen to the number of inquiries that come into constituent offices? That volume I don't think is going to change regardless of the number of MPPs. With bigger ridings in the north and fewer MPPs, all those constituent offices in all the little communities I think may have to be maintained.

Mr Stewart: As I understand it, up here in the north country some of the MPPs now just have representatives in some of these small towns who eventually phone the MPP's office. They're doing that now. They don't have offices in other areas, so why would they have to have them in the future? They're operating in a different way: Have a representative in such-and-such a town or village or whatever it might be who'll talk to the locals, phone the MPP's office and get back the information. Why wouldn't that be able to continue?

Mr Carrie: I think it will continue, and for that reason there will be no cost savings.

Mr Stewart: But that is not a cost factor, as I understand, and I stand to be corrected. I understand some of the MPPs up this way and in other parts of northern Ontario are doing that now and it's not a cost factor.

Mr Carrie: It will be when they have to start making long distance phone calls.

Mr Stewart: But they're doing that now.

Mr Carrie: Not in every case.

Mr Miclash: Dean and Marion, thank you for travelling down from Kenora to be with us here today. Mr Chair, I should declare a conflict. I am presently on leave from this board, so I just want to make that clear.

Mr Gravelle: It's okay.

Mr Miclash: It's okay? Marion, you make an excellent point in terms of government being close to the people. We've heard a good number of times this morning, in terms of federal representation, provincial representation and board representation such as yourself. A lot of people are concerned that the reduction in representation from MPPs in general will lead to the increase of paid lobby groups, people who have the ability to pay, getting the ear of government. Could you maybe comment on that?

Mrs Helash: I could understand how that could happen. Basically, any time you want to talk to us or we want to talk to you, your office is available and we just make arrangements. It would be very difficult for a great deal of us, should it not swing your way and go down to Mr Hampton's area, for us to get down, so therefore we would have to organize lobby groups that are closer to him and we'd have to organize lobby groups that were closer to the government itself, whoever the governing body.

Mr Miclash: So you would see an increase in your need for expenses. An example was brought to my attention earlier today by a councillor here in Dryden that these members don't understand the expenses involved when they have to come down as town councillors to lobby government. I think you would agree with that, that there would be additional costs to the board?

Mrs Helash: Yes, there would have to be an additional cost in order for us to make our voices heard.

Mr Miclash: You touched a little on taking the idea of the boundary changes to the people. As we know now, the federal government has a federal boundaries commission. I'd like your comments on what you would see a provincial boundaries commission looking like and how they would report back to the government.

Mrs Helash: Definitely the people from the area are going to have to be represented on it, the MPPs from the

areas that are being so adversely affected, especially here in northern Ontario.

Mr Carrie: I think the important thing is to try to depoliticize the process as much as is possible. Other than that, I really have no other comment.

Mr Miclash: I'd like to follow up on something mentioned by Mr Gilchrist. I think your response about Mr Harris not keeping his commitment to classroom education is a good one, but we will remember that during the campaign, in what Mr Harris called A Voice for the North, he very clearly indicated that representation in the north should be respected, should be looked at very carefully to ensure that southern solutions were not placed on unique northern problems. Do you see this redistribution in any way working towards that commitment he made to the people of the north?

Mrs Helash: No.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Helash and Mr Carrie for coming down and making your views known. Safe drive back.

1420

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION, DRYDEN-SIOUX LOOKOUT-IGNACE DIVISION

The Acting Chair: Now the representatives from the OSSTF, Mr Follis, the political action committee.

Mr Jim Follis: My name is Jim Follis and I'm a teacher here in Dryden at Dryden High School, and my colleague is Brian Kenny, also a teacher here in Dryden High School. Brian and I have had the good fortune to live in this community for a long time. I've lived here for 26½ years, and Brian a little longer, I think. Both of us have been involved provincially with our teacher federation for many years and have done a lot of travelling to southern Ontario to attend meetings and councils within our organization. We understand the risks of travel in the area and we also understand the political process you are all going through.

I provided you with a brief in written form. Do you all have it in front of you? I'd like to start off and then Brian has some comments he'd like to make too.

I'd like to thank the members of the committee for taking time to come to Dryden and listen to our concerns. The members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in this region are very concerned about governance structures and that they be fair and reasonable.

The proposed Bill 81 legislation would allow only one MPP to represent the people who inhabit one third of Ontario's territory, while another 101 would represent the residents of the other two thirds of Ontario. In addition, the problem is compounded by the fact that we live in the region most distant from the seat of government in Queen's Park.

I brought some overheads along, like any good teacher would, to punctuate some of my comments, but obviously we don't have an overhead projector available and I didn't know I would have to ask for it. I also didn't know that I would be making the presentation today until Tuesday of this week and I didn't know how long the presentation I would be able to make would be either, so

I was shooting in the dark with writing up these comments.

Winter arrives here early, as you can already tell. It comes in early November and the lakes are frozen until mid-May. Highway 17 was closed just a few days ago because of serious weather conditions and accidents, and it often is this time of the year. You will probably remember hearing of the Air Ontario crash in March here a few years ago. These are indications that the weather plays a major role in movement of the peoples of the area, not only of the MPPs but on all the rest of the things that go on in trying to be politically aware in this region. I understand Mr Hampton had some difficulties in travelling here today. I don't know what those were, but it's just another indication of the point we're making.

My work with OSSTF has given me many opportunities to meet with secondary teachers from all over Ontario. They ask me, "What do you do in the summer in Dryden?" I usually reply that if it falls on a Sunday, we go for a picnic.

The point, of course, is that we believe that the weather and distance would be considered before changing governance structures. Is it the government's intention to send the message to the people of our region to the effect that a 50% reduction of our voice in the Legislature in Ontario is what we really deserve?

As more and more change occurs in basic services across Ontario, problems will most certainly arise. Who will speak for us when local services in education, health services, natural resources, transportation, social services and others become threatened? Do you really expect that one member of Parliament can visit the same number of communities, consult with their councils, their schools, their doctors, their nurses and so on, as two members currently do?

What message is the government sending to the more than 50 far-flung first nations communities here? Hasn't there already been much unrest among the first nations people demonstrated in many parts of this province? Isn't there a danger that native people might view this as another indication that government is being further distanced from the first nations people and their concerns?

We hear that the reason for considering the reduction in the numbers of MPPs is simply to save money. Will there be real savings here? Won't the increased travel costs, communications costs, staff salaries necessary, negate the savings? Don't the potential consequences of this legislation really outweigh the few dollars that may or may not be saved in the final analysis?

The other major reason given for Bill 81 legislation by government is the rationale that since one federal MP serves the same region, why would one provincial MPP not be able to do the same job adequately? The simple answer is that the services provided by the two levels of governments are significantly different. People have commented on that today, as a matter of fact. Attached as an appendix is a photocopy of the blue pages of the Dryden telephone directory. I hope you'll notice that the services provided by the provincial jurisdiction are twice as long a list as those provided by the federal one.

What kind of increased risk will the new supermember who sits in this region be facing? Won't it be difficult to

find a qualified, committed person who wouldn't burn out in four years?

The Progressive Conservative Party holds only one seat in northern Ontario, yet this region is the most affected. If Bill 81 is enacted as planned, will the people of the north view the change as the worst kind of political abuse of power, that is, reducing the number of opposition members through legislation?

In summary, the Ontario secondary school teachers in this region believe that the changes proposed in Bill 81 would adversely affect the population of this region of Ontario. We believe that the meagre savings which might be realized are far outweighed by the real cost which would be borne by the residents of northwestern Ontario. Please hear our plea. We have asked a number of questions, but in reality it boils down to just one question: Does the government really care about the people of this region?

Mr Kenny, would you like to add anything?

Mr Brian Kenny: I want to start by saying thank you to all the members of provincial Parliament who travelled up here. I really, sincerely hope that in spite of the focus of the present government in fulfilling its mandate promised by Mr Harris, you really are open to what people have been telling you today.

I'm going to apologize, Chairperson. I know you've been beaten to death with the size of our riding, but may I clobber you just a little bit more? I want to say a couple of things. Having travelled to a number of Third World countries to teach as a voluntary person in the summer-time, I became aware of the size of our area as compared to the countries I went to. The statistics I read — I know you've had them already, but I want to put them in perhaps a new perspective, and I apologize if it's not new. According to the stats, this riding that we will now have is going to be larger than 45% of the countries in the world and larger than 50% of the states in the United States.

Having travelled around our area for five years as a curriculum planner, I want to set another perspective for you. When I drive from Toronto to Sudbury, and I've done it many times, I always go by time, not distance; it takes me three and a half hours to go from Toronto to Sudbury. If you travel from the north end of Red Lake to the south end of Rainy River it takes you two hours longer to go that distance. It takes five and a half hours to go from Red Lake to Rainy River, if the roads are good. In the wintertime you could add a couple of hours to that.

That doesn't include the fact that the riding still goes another 50% farther, perhaps longer — I'm sure Frank could tell us better on that — but there are no roads in the north. Now, it could be arguable that, yes, the population is very small. However, I propose to you that I think it's important to you as politicians to understand that even the smallest needs in the remotest areas are important to us as a society in Ontario.

1430

We cannot ignore the needs of, let's say, our native people, no matter how small those communities are. It is physically and humanly impossible to serve the needs of every one of those communities in the same way that you

can serve the needs in a small geographical location with a high population density. You could walk around a Toronto riding in a matter of hours or maybe minutes, but you can't fly around this district in a matter of hours.

There's one other thing I want to leave with you. I took the map of Ontario and I took our new proposed riding and I superimposed it on southern Ontario. I want you to do the same when you get back home. Here's what I found: If you superimpose our new riding on southern Ontario you would cover all the ridings from Windsor all the way through to Ottawa and our riding would then go past Montreal for another 100 kilometres. If you stretch it up a little to the north it would go 200 kilometres past Timmins, if you sort of bent it northward instead of eastward. The riding, as it was sitting there, would also cover part of the states of Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania. It is an enormous size. Again, I propose to you that we are small in population; however, you have to consider that it is just humanly impossible to service the people properly in the way you can in a densely populated situation. We really, sincerely hope that the government reconsiders this legislation.

The Acting Chair: Thank you. We have eight minutes for questions, starting with the government.

Mr Young: I'd like to ask you a question about school boards and money etc. Your presentation was excellent and I appreciate it, and I hope you'll take the opportunity to give me as thoughtful an answer as in your presentation and avoid the partisanship that the chair of the Kenora board took.

One of the things the school boards compete for is the MPP's time and attention. That was brought up by the chair of the Kenora board. If we had fewer school boards and if the MPP could meet with a school board which represented a larger number of schools, couldn't they get more done by addressing issues in one meeting rather than meeting with a number of different school boards in a number of different areas? Can you see anything productive that could come from a system based on that? It's no secret that we're looking at reducing the number of school boards.

Mr Kenny: I must apologize that I'm rather partisan and it would be very hard for me to give you an unbiased answer on that. Was it the Kenora board that just presented?

Mr Young: Yes.

Mr Kenny: I'll give you an honest answer about them. They are far more politically astute than the Dryden board. The Dryden board is not nearly as proficient at being political as the Kenora board is, and I say that as a compliment to the Kenora board.

I would very much fear for local autonomy and a local grasp of our own educational system if we reduced the number of school boards. You know I am a school teacher — I have a certain bias — but I also speak from a local taxpayers' base, and I really do fear the loss of a local grasp of our own needs if we reduce the number of school boards. I understand where you're coming from and I understand the need you perceive, but in rural areas I am really scared pitless of what will happen if the centre of my board is situated 300 kilometres from where I am now.

Mr Young: I'm just thinking of money. We are estimating about \$11 million in savings with this Fewer Politicians Act. I'm just wondering how much benefit the northern portion of that money could be if put into the classroom, and the same savings that could come from reducing the number of school boards put into the classroom, which is our goal.

Mr Kenny: Well, as Voltaire's *Candide* said, in the best of all possible worlds that might happen, but I've become very cynical. It doesn't always get back to the classroom, and what you might create is another massive bureaucracy in which the classroom again is ignored. I just don't think you can understand, unless you've walked in the shoes of a northern isolated community, what the unique needs are and how important it is for us to have some local control over our destiny.

I'll tell you something else, and I'm speaking from the heart: If you asked the average teacher in Dryden what they thought of their board, they would probably go ballistic. We've had so many labour problems in the last five or six years. But if you asked us whether we wanted to get rid of the board, we'd say, "No, we don't, because it's really necessary for us to have local autonomy."

Mr Mclash: Jim and Brian, thank you for your presentation. I like your use of the blue pages in the phone book. It's an example I used in the House as well, in addressing this bill. Mr Angus was presenting earlier this afternoon and he gave a unique presentation. He was able to speak from both the angle of a former federal member as well as a former provincial member, and I thought he stated the case, as you have, very well.

Something I've been asking a good number of groups as they've come forth is the need for a boundaries commission. You mentioned the first nations communities. You mentioned the remoteness to the north of us, north of the 51st, where there are no roads. I'm wondering if you could give us some comments on how you see possibly a provincial boundaries commission addressing that problem and addressing some of the problems you brought up in your presentation.

Mr Follis: I'd like to answer that and a previous question at the same time. It seems to me that if we go to large boards, the people in each community will then have to travel to some remote location to have one of these meetings in the north and the cost of travel would be greatly increased. In the same way, correct me if I'm wrong, but in 1992 didn't the Progressive Conservative Party agree that there should be a lower threshold of some 15 seats in northern Ontario, and now the boundaries commission has reversed that and we want to go to 10?

The boundaries commission, it would seem to me, should be made up of all parties, the majority being folks who live in the region, or at least have the majority have input into the decision in a real way.

I resent an earlier comment you made, Mr Young, that a lot of rhetoric is being thrown around here. I think the people speaking here today, not just us but everyone else, are really concerned that we're losing our ownership of our area and our voice in the Legislature of Ontario. We are the people and we really deserve a voice. There must be some sort of lower threshold that we cannot go below

in terms of representation. I don't know if I answered your question, Frank.

Mr Gravelle: Mr Follis and Mr Kenny, thank you very much. Let me follow up on that. The truth is, if these hearings have real value and if the government members in particular want to listen to the reasons the people up here do not think there should be only one riding rather than two, and the same thing with the Port Arthur and the Lake Nipigon thing — I think it's been made abundantly clear today and I would hope they've been listening to that. The problem, in my estimation, comes down to the fact that on the one hand they say they're going to save money, but you've discussed some of the larger costs that may be incurred down the line, which I don't think they've thought about, that may be incurred in terms of the whole board issue and everything else. I think that's important. They also tend to use the federal MP issue as a regular one as well, and I don't think any of the arguments are legitimately fair.

What it comes down to is whether you think in a democracy there should be fair representation, and if you do, whether it's simply on the basis of precise numbers. It might look okay in a book, but it's a question of whether people are being fairly represented. I think you made a really good case for that, as have most of the presenters.

I guess what it comes down to is, are these public hearings legitimate? Are they really going to listen and make some — are they going to be convinced that indeed people deserve to be represented and people deserve to have an opportunity to have this relationship with their member of Parliament?

I think you've made the case. I think the savings is a false argument, because there will be more expenses down the road. Comparing to the federal members just isn't fair. And you don't want to compare the federal and provincial members; that really isn't the point or the issue, but if they're going to do it, it's not fair. I certainly think you've made the case extremely well, as have many of the other groups. I simply hope, and I'm sure you do as well, that they are actually listening to us today.

1440

Mr Hampton: I have a couple of questions that in part flow from some of the points the government was trying to make. I think we all concede that democracy costs money. I'd even make the statement that one of the things we learned in the last war, 50 years ago, is that democracy can cost even more than money and that democracy can be quite worthwhile. I think that's been demonstrated over and over again.

The government, and not just in terms of this riding distribution issue but also in terms of its approach to school boards and municipalities, seems to take the view, though, that having large bureaucracies — and that large bureaucracy can be a very large school board or it can be one large urban municipality, the so-called new city of Toronto, with four million people, and I would argue it equally applies to what the government is doing provincially, that is, pulling decision-making and pulling government offices out of communities like Dryden or Fort Frances or Kenora, even Thunder Bay, pulling government offices out of places like that and centralizing

everything in Toronto — the government seems to take the view that that's somehow going to provide better government. Then on the other hand they seem to be taking the view that you don't need as many watchdogs. In my view, that's really what an MPP is, and I suspect a lot of the government members will learn this over time, that they're not there to salute the Premier's office but are there to give representation to their constituents and to ensure that the bureaucracy, the centralized bureaucracy, actually pays attention to people outside of Toronto.

Does it worry you that with the centralization that's happening on the one hand and losing the number of watchdogs on the other, we're going to see more alienation in northern Ontario, more people saying, "They don't listen to us at any time anyway, so why do we bother being a part of this?" Does that worry you?

Mr Kenny: It certainly worries me. Referring to the previous speaker, definitely, equal is not necessarily fairer and cheaper is not necessarily better. I believe we are the most expensive democracy in the world, aren't we? Because of our federalism, it's a matter of reality. I really do fear a growing cynicism if we were to be cut back.

Forgive me for being political, but if I were a member of the Conservative Party provincially — and I tell you I'm not — I would say to us, "Don't do this, because it tells the people of the north that the Conservative Party doesn't give a damn about the north." I think it's a very bad message, to cut us down from 10 seats to five. I know you do care, but no one will ever convince us that you care if you cut these boundaries by five. Our perception will always be cynical. I say that to you maybe to help you out.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Kenny and Mr Follis, for making your views known to us.

DARLENE GUINN

The Acting Chair: The next deputant on the list is Mr Weare, from the Dryden and District Labour Council. Is he here? In that case, we'll move to Mrs Darlene Guinn, a federal returning officer.

Mrs Darlene Guinn: I passed out some copies of what I loosely expect to say. I would like to congratulate the government on its initiative in trying to harmonize the federal and provincial boundaries. I think that there has been voter confusion out there, because I've administered. Some of the voters come to me and say: "I vote at such and such a church. I vote there all the time and I can't understand why you made me vote at another place." If they were harmonized, that would certainly save a little bit of voter confusion.

However, to me, there's only been one seat lost. Everybody keeps talking about five seats, but I was a federal returning officer so I've administered a larger territory. Mostly I guess I'm here on behalf of administrative things. The government has to weigh the cost saving that they perceive they will make with this harmonization against voter disfranchisement in the north. At least, voters feel that way.

Mostly it's not so much on the decision to change the boundaries that I want to appear; it's that the boundaries were changed by the federal commission. The federal

commission had a small number of hearings, at which point the Prime Minister suspended the hearings. A lot of people didn't appear before the federal boundaries commission because they thought there would be more hearings later on when the suspension was lifted. When the suspension was lifted, there were no further hearings; it just went through as it was. I had intended to appear before that committee but didn't because I thought that there would still be time.

At the back of my paper I did a map and I showed you as much as I could fit of Thunder Bay-Nipigon on this page. The red part will show you where the federal riding was prior to this commission's changing it. They've pretty much doubled the geographic territory. They've gained 2,000 voters by doubling the geographic territory. They took away some of the urban voters that I had in Thunder Bay, gave me a huge geographical territory, and I have 2,000 more voters. As you can see, at the last election, we had 55,532 voters. The new riding estimates that I got from Elections Canada were 57,135.5 voters. That must be the dog I had on my list the first time I did the election.

I really feel that this new riding boundary that you see on the map is going to be an administrative nightmare for someone. I know it's not going to be me. I will not be appointed the new federal returning officer. I know who is going to be appointed; I've already been informed of the person's name. He's a very nice person, but he's going to have a devil's own time trying to administrate this. For one thing, people from Thunder Bay, some of us do have contacts in the outlying regions like Geraldton, Marathon, Terrace Bay and Schreiber; some of us don't.

They're going to shorten the time frame from 49 days to 36 days, to do double the territory. We already have some inaccessible polling stations. On the map you're going to see the town of Armstrong flanked by Mud River and Ferland. Whoever your new returning officer is — or if you reappoint Bill for Thunder Bay, which I think is fine, I'll help him all I can — but I want you to know that Mud River and Ferland are both accessible by train only every second day. You have to send your material to Armstrong. It has to then be repackaged and put on the train. It goes east one day and then it goes west the next day.

Mr Hampton: If the trains are on time.

Mrs Guinn: If the trains are on time. I understand that when you take the job of returning officer, it is your job to put people in place who are going to do the job that they're trained to do, if you have time to train them. It is your job to get the enumeration done properly. With automated lists, that should be a little bit easier, but I'm going to suggest that maybe it's not going to be as easy as they think. It's your job to get the ballots to the polling stations and it's your job to make sure that you get those ballots back in your hands in a reasonable length of time. That is what I'm concerned about with this doubling of the territory.

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Now I know this territory was looked after by someone else, and I'm not saying that it can't be done. It can be done. However, it's going to be a whole lot more difficult maybe than you've even taken into account because

you're going to have double the geographic size and one returning officer. Sure, you're going to give extra assistants, but those assistants are going to be hundreds of miles away from you and you're not going to be able to control everything they do, and that is your responsibility. When you're a returning officer, you're responsible for what people do underneath you, and I'm telling you, it is going to be more difficult to be able to feel certain that a good job is being done in the far-flung parts of the riding if you're not satisfied that the people you have are going to do the job.

Part of the returning officer's job is that you must hire people who are supplied by the lists by the different parties, the one who won the election last time, the one who came second and so on. You are to use these people; you don't have a choice. Part of the returning officer's job is to find a way to work within that framework and we all do what we have to do. Sometimes you're not too happy with the choices that you have to make, but if you're going to have to administer a territory that's as large as Thunder Bay-Nipigon is now, according to the federal boundaries, your job is not going to be easy.

I thought about: "Well, what would I do if I were in your place? I would like to harmonize the boundaries with the feds. I'd like to save some money, if I can." My first recommendation to you is, please, make no commitment to do this until after the feds have run a federal election, because they're running on these new boundaries. Some of these ridings are going to have a great deal of difficulty. I feel sorry for Kenora-Rainy River. I know they've had a great deal of difficulty in the past, because I've spoken with Joan Goss at different meetings with returning officers, and I know what kind of difficulty she has up here in the riding as it exists now, without the territory they've added to it.

I'm not saying it can't be done. I'm saying it's going to be very difficult to be able to run an impartial election, which is the returning officer's job. It's going to be very, very difficult.

What I would like to say is, when the feds hold the election, I think it would be prudent to put in an observer in each of these northern ridings, especially when the territories have been made so large and diverse. When you put in that observer, though, I suggest that it be someone who has — I hesitate to say political experience, but someone who has been involved in helping out in elections, who knows a little bit about the way the process works. Don't send someone in there as a political favour, somebody who needs a job in the riding kind of thing. Don't do that. Send somebody in there with some kind of knowledge who can report back to you accurately what's happening, so that when it becomes your turn to run that riding, you will have found the pitfalls ahead of time and you will not make the same mistakes — and there will be some. It's too large a riding for there not to be mistakes. It's not going to be easy to work.

I hate to say this, because I know most of you are from southern Ontario. This is northern Ontario, but I know some of you are from southern Ontario, and I think the rationalization between federal and provincial ridings in southern Ontario won't be nearly as difficult, and you're not going to get the flak that you're going to get

here. Even the old riding boundaries would have been a considerable improvement over what they've come up with this time.

I hear you say there would a loss of five seats, and I assume that's five provincial seats. There is a loss of one federal seat. The ridings, I thought, were a decent size. They weren't difficult to administer. People could get in and out of their voting places and they were in touch with their voting offices. They didn't have that much difficulty. But now they've lost another one. They've lost another whole rural one, which changes the riding to the point where I think it's very difficult for a person who lives in Thunder Bay to be able to administer all of the outlying districts without difficulty.

If you have any questions, please feel free. I have a question, though. Can you tell me, is this written in stone already?

The Acting Chair: Mrs Guinn, we have some questions for you.

Mrs Guinn: That's what I hear from back there.

The Acting Chair: Maybe a response will come out in the answers here.

Mrs Guinn: Okay.

The Acting Chair: We have eight minutes. We start with the Liberals.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for appearing. I think you're bringing a view here that is most important. I think all of us are concerned with the way that elections occur and we are very concerned, obviously, that they be fair and democratic and that they're administered in a proper fashion. One of the concerns we have with this bill in general, besides the boundary issue, is that the rules for the federal Elections Act are not identical to the provincial ones.

Mrs Guinn: No, they're not.

Mr Michael Brown: It would seem logical to someone that if federal boundaries are the same, provincial and federal rules would be the same. If that were to happen, and the government over there talks about saving dollars, the intelligent thing to do for Elections Ontario would be just to subcontract this operation to Elections Canada. That way, we would have the same people run each election, we would have more confidence in the election. You talked about observers, but these wouldn't be observers; they could actually operate election after election.

I wonder what you would think of that suggestion. It's one that's been bandied about. It would seem to me that if it were truly the government's intention to do that, that would be the way to do it, just use the federal bureaucracy for elections for provincial elections. Or I suppose it could be vice versa.

Mrs Guinn: Or vice versa. There are different rules. There are different ways of doing things. For instance, provincially each returning office gets a budget for office; federally they don't get a budget for office. Federally everything's paid through Elections Canada. You're given petty cash, which has to be returned at the end of the period. There are lots of little things, which can be gotten over. That's not a problem. We had to learn how to do our jobs and your provincial ones had to learn how to do their jobs, and they do a good job, either one. If the provincial government wants to use the federal returning

officers, that's fine, but they'd still have to train them. It would still cost them money to train them and it may be better to go with the ones they have.

Mr Michael Brown: That may be, but all I'm saying is that the one bureaucracy would in the same period have two elections rather than one, a provincial and a federal one —

Mrs Guinn: It still wouldn't be one bureaucracy, though. They're so different.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm saying you would have to harmonize the rules in order to do that.

Mrs Guinn: In order to have the same person, yes.

Mr Michael Brown: If the government over here is looking to save money and ensure fairness, and they believe the federal boundaries are good enough for Ontarians and federal democracy is good enough for Ontarians, why wouldn't they believe all the other rules are good enough for Ontarians? I couldn't find the logic not to believe that.

Mrs Guinn: That's a question I can't answer.

Mr Michael Brown: No, I was just wondering, doesn't that make sense?

Mrs Guinn: Not to me.

Mr Michael Brown: Not to you?

Mrs Guinn: No.

Mr Michael Brown: Why?

Mrs Guinn: Because they have to be trained, whether it's federal or provincial. You have to spend the money one way or another, whether it's federal or provincial. I don't think the rules can be the same for federal and provincial. For instance, provincially I believe you have a six-month residency requirement for people before they can vote. Federally, you can move into the riding the day before and vote in your new riding. There is no residency requirement. There are a lot of differences that I don't think you can rationalize overnight.

Mr Michael Brown: That's interesting, because the government argues we could just use the same enumeration list, which couldn't be.

Mrs Guinn: You can, you certainly can, with revision.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes, with revision.

Mrs Guinn: And revision takes place federally and provincially.

1500

Mr Hampton: You brought up some interesting points. I just want to go through them with you because you probably know more of the details of this than we do. It is my understanding, and you made the point in your brief, that the Prime Minister suspended the federal commission.

Mrs Guinn: Yes, he did.

Mr Hampton: In effect, when the Prime Minister suspended the federal commission there was no further opportunity for public debate or public discussion or community consideration of the new federal boundaries.

Mrs Guinn: Not here in the north, that I'm aware of.

Mr Hampton: It was my understanding that there were other places in the country where there was no opportunity for that as well.

Mrs Guinn: I wouldn't doubt it.

Mr Hampton: In effect the federal commission really didn't have the run of its course to consider exactly

where it was going and to get public input and public response.

Mrs Guinn: Yes. I didn't think there was enough, but that's a personal opinion. I also made the point that in the federal boundaries act there's a provision right in the legislation that gives you a 25%, plus or minus, use of the population for geographical differences. When I looked at this, when I saw this come out I thought the boundaries commission really didn't take that into consideration. They couldn't have if they're going to double the size of the federal riding the way it sits now, and the way it sits now it's not difficult to administer. Most of the geographical places on the map feed naturally into Thunder Bay, the way the riding remains until January 8. But once January 8 passes and these riding boundaries become law, an awful lot of the small towns in there do not naturally feed into the Thunder Bay area.

Mr Hampton: You express concern and you make the recommendation here, "Make no firm commitment to harmonize the boundaries until after a federal event has been held."

I take it from your presentation that you're concerned about the problem of administering and getting ballot boxes out and getting them in and having people there to supervise the election.

Mrs Guinn: That's correct.

Mr Hampton: Given your position, it's natural that you would be concerned about that. My concern would be that we're really dealing with one of the fundamentals of democracy here. One of the fundamentals of democracy is that people should have an opportunity to vote and it should be more than just a bare opportunity to vote. People, no matter what their income class, geographical location, urbanness or remoteness ought to have an opportunity to vote in a meaningful way.

I think I hear you saying that even considering this from the federal perspective, discounting for a moment that northern Ontario is going to lose five seats, that this new provincial seat is going to be larger than 45% of the countries in the world, there are some problems in just assuring that people will be able to vote, that people will be able to exercise their democratic right.

Mrs Guinn: I have some concerns about administration, but the job of the returning officer is to ensure that everyone gets a vote. That's their job. It's going to be made more difficult, but it's going to have to be done, and it will be done. People will get their ballot boxes and they'll get their votes. It's not going to be as easy. It's going to be difficult, but that's the returning officer's job, and I'm sure they will do it, but there are going to be really difficult areas. I would like them to wait until after the event is held so they can see what the difficulties are going to be and whether or not they really way to go down that road.

I think they can do it in southern Ontario, but make some exceptions in the north because of geographical distances and small population pockets.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you for your presentation, with a slightly different perspective from some of the others that we've had today.

First a question on the 25%, plus or minus: Is it your contention that the 57,000 votes that are going to be in

the new riding, for which you were the returning officer, are less than a 25% variance to the larger-population ridings in the south?

Mrs Guinn: I understand that under federal law there can only be so many seats in Ontario, that the number of seats in Ontario is fixed. To accommodate the larger population growth in southern ridings — because North York has grown by leaps and bounds, they had well over 100,000 electors, double the number of electors, the boundaries had to be changed. There were too many electors. I believe they tried to keep to an average of between 70,000 and 80,000 voters per riding. So they have taken into account geographical differences, because we only have 57,000 in this huge territory.

Mr Hardeman: That was my point.

Mrs Guinn: They have taken it into account but I'm saying it's not enough.

Mr Hardeman: My calculations on the geographic considerations that were given for the boundaries are beyond the 25%. Under law they're supposed to stay within 25% between the densely populated and the sparsely populated areas. In fact, they have gone beyond that to accommodate some geographic problems.

If I could go to your suggestion that the present federal boundaries —

Mrs Guinn: That they will be changed in the year 2002.

Mr Hardeman: Yes, the ones that are there now, but prior to the change the ones that you represented, you felt comfortable with the fact that they could and should be harmonized provincially and that under your structure you as a returning officer could handle that quite well —

Mrs Guinn: Without a problem.

Mr Hardeman: — as a provincial jurisdiction. Do you feel it also would carry through that the representative would have the same ability to handle the differences from the present system?

Mrs Guinn: Your present returning — yes.

Mr Hardeman: Yes, recognizing that you can handle it as an election and not see a major problem between provincial and federal, do you think that also holds true for the member representing that same area?

Mrs Guinn: Well, Mr Comuzzi represents our area and seems to get around okay.

When I was appointed as a returning officer I had to relinquish all political affiliation and I did so. I really haven't been involved at all in politics since I took the appointment as the returning officer. I've excused myself from political discussions because I didn't want to become involved. Whether or not the representation is going to be the same or feasible I can't tell you because I really don't know. I haven't stayed involved.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Guinn, for coming in and giving us your practical and pragmatic considerations on the administrative intricacies of these changes.

1510

LYNN BEYAK

The Acting Chair: Could we now have Lynn Beyak come to the table, if she's around, and make her submission.

Mrs Lynn Beyak: Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation today. My name is Lynn Beyak. I'm the PC candidate of record for the Rainy River riding.

I expected this issue to generate more controversy than it has within the riding. While some disagree, the vast majority of people I speak to on the street are proud of our government for being the first one in recent memory to do exactly what it said it would do, of a government that is leading by example and has determined through extensive public consultation that government at every level has become too big, too cumbersome, too costly and too unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of the people who pay for it: the taxpayers of Ontario.

Constituents support our efforts to get the debt and deficit under control so that dollars now spent on interest payments can go towards valuable social programs instead. Most are willing to give the Fewer Politicians Act a chance and feel that if the federal MP can do it, then the provincial MPP can too.

I thought long and hard on this issue before seeking the nomination in 1995. I had some misgivings because of the sheer geography of the riding but realized that if I truly believed in smaller, more effective government, then saving had to start at the top. Along with our constituents I am pleased to see that our government has scrapped MPPs' gold-plated pension plans and tax-free allowances and reduced their own pay by 5%. In addition they appointed the smallest cabinet in 30 years and reduced government administrative costs by \$200 million so far.

During the campaign I pledged to protect our voice and our identity and ensure that we were represented in a cost-effective and proactive way. I feel strongly that if the Liberal and NDP incumbents aren't up to the task, there is a good Conservative sitting right here who certainly is.

As I listened to Howard Hampton and Frank Miclash and their negative attitudes in the Legislature, I am struck by their abysmal record in government and their lack of constructive alternatives now. They don't even attend the northern caucus meetings and attempt to justify their inaction with rhetoric. There is no excuse for lack of cooperation with the government, especially when the wellbeing of your constituents is at stake.

We have had better representation in the past 16 months from Premier Mike Harris, Finance Minister Ernie Eves and Minister of Northern Development and Mines Chris Hodgson than we have had over the past 10 years. They have listened well and ably presented our needs to the rest of the caucus. We have been visited by over a dozen MPPs and have seen unprecedented progress on our roads, telecommunications, health care and infrastructure.

Under the Liberals and the NDP our health care system was rapidly deteriorating. Beds were closed and the empty buildings were left standing. Many of our emergency rooms were in jeopardy and doctor recruitment had become a next-to-impossible task because of our outdated equipment and lack of hope for any improvement in the foreseeable future. Our concerns have been addressed by

this government and solutions are already in place in many communities.

Past governments threw money at make-work and Jobs Ontario projects that usually were not relevant to our needs. When the subsidy ran out, the jobs disappeared because they weren't real private sector jobs to begin with. A cycle of dependency was created, sadly, and low self-esteem was the result for many. This government treats us like the decent, hardworking people we are. On the northern tour and in *A Voice for the North*, clear recognition was given to our ability to manage capably our own destiny.

The NDP removed \$60 million from the northern Ontario heritage fund and spent fishing licence revenue that was supposed to be placed in a dedicated fund. The Mike Harris government put it all back, with interest, and a further commitment of \$30 million annually. This money is greatly appreciated, by the way, as is the attitude of all the Conservative MPPs who recognize that when our infrastructure here in the north is on an equal footing with the more populated areas of the province, we can do our part to contribute a fair share of revenues. What a refreshing change from our own MPPs who portray northerners as a whining bunch of have-nots totally out of touch with the fiscal realities left by 10 years of Liberal and NDP mismanagement.

After watching Howard and Frank in the Legislature for the past 16 months, often contradicting one another, I am convinced that quality is far more important than quantity and that a united voice from the new riding will be more beneficial to all.

Competent staff will still be in place in offices throughout the riding as well as the northern development offices. As our government works more directly with hospitals, municipalities and boards I see a smaller and more focused role for the provincial representative.

I have outlined some of the unique needs of the north but I also recognize that technology is bringing us closer together every day. The old boundaries between north, south, east and west within our province are rapidly disappearing, and with them the need for so many politicians, bureaucrats and levels of government.

We are hardworking and dedicated people. Give us decent roads and good communications, get the regulations out of our way, lower our taxes and watch us grow. We have a strong and indomitable northern spirit and contribute greatly to the wellbeing of the province through our tourism and natural resources. We are proud partners in a province that is quickly becoming the economic engine of Canada once again and we want to do our part in the north in getting Ontario's fiscal house in order. The Fewer Politicians Act is one more step on the road to hope, opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians and I proudly support it today, as I did in the campaign.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Beyak. We have approximately 12 minutes for questions, so we'll divide it by four and start with Mr Hampton.

Interjection.

The Acting Chair: It's the northern air — by three.

Mr Hampton: Thank you, Chair. Lynn, this is quite a piece you put together here.

Mrs Beyak: I thought so.

Mr Hampton: I had hoped it would be about some of the issues concerning redistribution, but let me get you clearly on the record. You don't believe that it is detrimental to northern Ontario to lose five of their 15 MPPs? You don't think that's detrimental to northern Ontario people, losing five representatives?

Mrs Beyak: Not if the quality is not there, Howard. No, I don't.

Mr Hampton: Okay. So let me ask you this. You believe that even though northern Ontario will go from 15 seats to 10 seats in the provincial Legislature, that will have no detrimental effect in terms of northern Ontario's capacity to speak out for the interests of northern Ontario people, will have no detrimental effect upon our unique communities and our unique geographical areas to have adequate representation?

Mrs Beyak: We are downsizing government and bureaucracy, and the north will still have 20% more representation than the south, so when you downsize government and you keep that fairness towards the north, I think we're very fortunate.

Mr Hampton: Okay. I was struck by just a couple of things you said in your brief. On page 2 you said: "The jobs disappeared because they weren't real private sector jobs to begin with." I'm not sure what you mean by that, "real private sector jobs."

Mrs Beyak: Whenever there was money handed out from Toronto in the past, they never considered the relevancy of the needs of the riding. It was usually a conditional grant and it was given forth on: "This is the money. This is what you have to do." Like the Premier said during the campaign: "Here's some money. Build another garage for snow removal." We said, "We don't need a garage for snow removal." "Well, build it anyway because that's what the money is for."

There was never any money and any autonomy given to us to do with as we pleased and as we needed, and this government is doing that through Bill 26. In allocating more power to the municipalities and the local level of government, we can do what we need to do with the money. We can make it more attractive for businesses to come. We can buy hospital equipment through the northern Ontario heritage fund. The criteria there give us a chance to improve our infrastructure so that businesses will be attracted here. Government money just recycles the same old money. We need new money into the economy.

Mr Hampton: But I'm struck by your comment about "real private sector jobs," that they weren't real private sector jobs to begin with.

Mrs Beyak: No, they weren't. They would just come into the area, do the job and leave. And then when the project was over, we didn't need it. It sat there like a white elephant and the people were gone and the jobs were gone.

Mr Hampton: Does that mean that, for example, the job that a nurse does, because it's not a private sector job, isn't a real job?

Mrs Beyak: No, not at all. We want to create new jobs, though. Nurses and doctors will always be necessary in the whole province but those are government jobs that

are essential. We need new money, new private sector jobs, to help the north grow, to help Ontario grow.

1520

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): Thank you for your presentation. There are some comments that we've heard throughout the hearings, and certainly what is happening is that the federal representation in terms of ridings and the provincial representation in terms of ridings are going to be mirrored. That is pointed out in your paper here in terms of what a federal MP can do and what a provincial MP can do. But one thing that's somewhat different is that the federal MPs don't have the support mechanisms that a provincial member does in terms of through school boards, through municipalities, through district health councils etc to work through the province in terms of providing that representation.

In terms of a focused role, do you believe that because there will be less MPPs in the Legislature, they will in fact have a greater voice and provide better representation to deal with the issues that affect their region?

Mrs Beyak: Yes, I do believe that now; I wasn't so sure when I ran for the nomination. As I said, the sheer geography worried me. I watched the federal MP do it and figured that a provincial one could too. But as I've watched our government over the last 16 months devolve more power to the local level, I think it's important that the MPP's role is more focused and that more government is handled by the boards and the municipalities.

Mr Tascona: To comment on that, in terms of doing one's job, and you talk about quality, isn't it important that a member prioritize their activities in terms of focusing on what is necessary for the broader community rather than, say, attending birthday parties and events of a social nature, in terms of what is in fact real representation? Would you share those views?

Mrs Beyak: I sure do. That's an interesting comment. Not only that, but I find that our MPPs currently waste an inordinate amount of time on negativity. When you're constantly looking for the negative in everything, you could be spending that time so much more productively. One example that comes to mind is this tax break for the rich that we hear about day after day in the Legislature. In fact, 1.4% of income earners make in excess of \$100,000; 10% of the population make in excess of \$50,000. Our tax break is for all the hardworking lower- and middle-class Ontarians.

Mr Hampton: You don't believe that?

Mrs Beyak: You don't have to believe it; the statistics are there.

Mr Hampton: The president of the Bank of Montreal thanks you.

Mrs Beyak: Simple math shows it to be true. The time wasted could be better spent, absolutely.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): Mrs Beyak, thank you very much for your presentation. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions. You just touched briefly on the northern development offices. Actually, this shows sometimes our lack of knowledge about some of the things that happen in the north. One of the things I was impressed with was the fact that the Ministry of Natural Resources and the minister, Chris Hodgson, have maintained 28 northern development offices while at the same

time he's reduced the administration in his own ministry so that he could make sure those were kept open. Would you say those were an important part of the northern community and an important office for people in the north?

Mrs Beyak: They're excellent, Lillian. They're a focus in the community, the heartbeat of many of the far northern communities. The staff, for the most part, are very knowledgeable. I don't know them all personally. But that's where people go when they need information on any government issue, and they get help. They're excellent, and there are so many of them across the north. They don't have them in southern Ontario, and it is a focus of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Mrs Ross: That's right. Thank you. Also, I wanted to commend you. First of all, you are a very proud northern Ontarian. I know that. It comes through very loud and clear, and it's very nice to hear that.

Many of us look at the boundaries and, to be totally honest, we worry, despite what the opposition might say, about whether there is fair representation there. When I look at the numbers and I look at the geography, I understand it's a huge geographical area. But we have allowed for, in some instances, more than 20% for the population base and that sort of thing. But if we provide more resources, do you think that would also help MPPs to represent their constituents, along with the northern development offices as well?

Mrs Beyak: I think the northern Ontario heritage fund being returned to the north was one of the best things this government did. It has a northern board of directors. It is ours to do with as we see fit. For infrastructure, just the criteria alone allow us to even perhaps purchase a CAT scanner and MRI. I can't believe that finally we might have that kind of equipment in northwestern Ontario. It's difficult to attract doctors when your equipment is so out of date and is not first class.

Mr Miclash: Lynn, I must agree with Howie: Your presentation kind of blows me away as well. I can't remember any time where we've contradicted each other in the Legislature. I wish you had come up with some —

Mrs Beyak: VLTs.

Mr Miclash: Well, according to your president, I'm in the same group, but we'll leave that for another day.

Mr Bill Murdoch is the parliamentary assistant to the northern development minister, Chris Hodgson. You mentioned what a great job Chris is doing in the north, and I'm sure we'll have differing views on that as well. But Mr Murdoch is also a coauthor of a document that you used during the campaign, *A Voice for the North*. He's already indicated publicly that he will not support this legislation because of what it does to northern Ontario, after issuing that document, *A Voice for the North*. How is it that you can contradict his view?

Mrs Beyak: I'm sorry, Frank, but I couldn't speak for Mr Murdoch. I would have to talk to him about it and find out why he feels that way.

Mr Miclash: Okay. Let's go to your views, then. During the campaign, and I'll quote directly from an article here, the *Fort Frances Times*:

"PC candidate Lynn Beyak certainly pooh-poohed that scenario in the final days of the campaign," and we're referring to the amalgamation of the ridings, of course, "claiming any talk of the ultimate demise of the Rainy River riding was fearmongering by desperate politicians. In fact, Lynn told voters at an all-candidates meeting here that she'd fight such a suggestion tooth and nail."

Lynn, that's what I expected in this document: for you to come in here and do what you told the voters of the Rainy River riding you would do if you were elected. Now you've completely turned around. Explain how you could have had this great change of mind. When you were asking for the vote, you were going to fight this tooth and nail; you must remember that. Now today you think it's a wonderful idea. I don't understand.

Mrs Beyak: With all due respect, Frank, and I've noticed this in the Legislature as well, you often misrepresent the facts or are factually inaccurate on many occasions.

Mr Miclash: Is she calling me a liar?

Mrs Beyak: That article is not a quote from me, nor is it an interview from me; it's an editorial from a very left-wing editor in this riding.

Mr Miclash: So what you're telling me is that you did not say you would fight this tooth and nail. There is no record of that?

Mrs Beyak: My actual quote was that I would protect the identity of the riding, which is the Kenora-Rainy River riding, and that I would ensure we had a strong, proactive voice at the Legislature. I wasn't elected, so I couldn't fight too hard anyway; you fellas could have.

Mr Miclash: Lynn, you went on, and again maybe you would dispute this, and you indicated in some way to the voters of the Rainy River area that new boundaries in the province would have to be discussed in direct partnership with all Ontarians. I'm just wondering what you meant by that comment.

Mrs Beyak: It's 16 months since this now has come to the table. I had hoped that after the election you and Howard might get together — had I been elected, I would have — to discuss a far northern boundary, north of the Albany River, as one riding, one far northern riding. I wasn't elected, as I said, so I wasn't able to do that. I had hoped it would be brought forth by you.

Mr Miclash: So, as the federals have a boundaries commission, you would support the idea that maybe these members here should go back and recommend a provincial boundaries commission so that those people could be contacted north of 51st, as a lot of our previous presenters have suggested, in order to look at this in a non-partisan way to allow those people — and we haven't seen anybody; the furthest north we've seen from here is Sioux Lookout.

Mrs Beyak: No, as I said in my presentation, Frank, I thought a year and a half ago that might not be a bad idea. The presentation's very clear. After watching for the last year and a half, I think quality is important. I think we waste a lot of time on negativity. I think our government is focusing more at the local level and that that's the route to go for the future. MPPs will have more time to be proactive. Local government, closest to the people, will make the decisions.

Mr Miclash: Lynn, how is it that none of the mayors who have presented to us agree with you? None of them today who presented agree.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Miclash, and thank you, Mrs Beyak, for I guess what you'd call a stimulating presentation.

1530

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S DECADE COUNCIL

The Chair: Our next presenter is Chris Mather. You have 20 minutes. You know how to go, so the second time at the ball game.

Ms Chris Mather: Yes, thank you. First of all, I have to bring the apologies of Dr Leni Untinen, who actually prepared this brief and who is the coordinator of the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council. I am a member of the executive of the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council and when Leni couldn't come today, she asked me if I would do it for her.

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council is a non-partisan, volunteer-based organization, composed of representatives of district women's groups as well as individuals. Its main goal is to improve the quality of the lives of women in northwestern Ontario in all spheres: economic, social and political. Decade Council originated in 1976 and has remained accountable to the women of northwestern Ontario. Women participating on Decade Council come from the communities of Kenora, Keewatin, Jaffray Melick, Sioux Lookout, Hudson, Dryden, Red Lake, Atikokan, Marathon, Manitouwadge, Nipigon, Terrace Bay, Thunder Bay and surrounding townships, Longbow Lake, Geraldton, Fort Hope and Big Trout Lake.

Northwestern Ontario has a population of approximately 236,000 people, living in a total of 161 communities across 1,200 miles of highway, with many communities accessible only by rail or air. The immensity of northwestern Ontario contributes to regional disparity, inadequacies in transportation, communication and telecommunication and isolation of communities and individuals. As well, many personal complications are attributed in part to the geographic reality. These include unsafe, unhealthy and frustrating situations due to a lack of police, health, mental health, social and recreational services and a higher incidence of alcoholism, violence and crime.

Northwestern Ontario's resource extraction economic base has dwindled severely in the past decade, with a resulting loss in jobs and community stability. Small, unorganized communities with minimal taxation sources cannot support needed services. I think that in part might help to clear up some of the confusion around why a smaller number of people would need more representation. If they have fewer services within their community and less access to the places where the decisions are made around specific services, that's why they need more MPPs.

Party lines, potholes, ice roads — an ice road is a road that's only available in the winter; it's not a road that's slippery — forest fires with necessary evacuations, air

medivac, high energy consumption and minimal television and radio options are a part of life in northwestern Ontario.

Many of the above issues and realities have made up the work of the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council for the past two decades. Regional women come together, identify and discuss the issues from their communities, and the council presents them to appropriate private and public sector decision-makers. Women have traditionally shouldered the human element of development in regional communities and, as such, are the experts on the quality of life.

Decade Council knows the necessity of accessible, approachable, elected political representation. Our interest is not partisan. It is in seeing that our representative, whatever the party, carries women's issues and concerns from the north to Toronto. Women are 52% of the voting population. They are not a special interest group. Their experience in the home, the workplace and the community is valuable to planning for the future of our province.

All regional citizens live and work many hundreds of miles from the seats of power that dictate the quality of their lives: the provincial and federal governments. Many residents live hundreds of miles from their elected representatives to those institutions. The current provincial electoral boundaries present many systemic barriers for northwestern Ontario residents. The broader federal electoral boundaries present even more.

Northwestern Ontario citizens have few options for access to government. Only 16 of the more than 150 organized and unorganized northwestern Ontario communities have northern development offices. Fewer have any other ministry offices. For the rest of the population, the only access point is through their elected representative. Regional MPPs are the human link between government and the people. If changes are to be made, northwestern Ontario deserves more, not less, representation. This region has given its resources freely and without limitation to our province. We will not now be forced to "press 1 for general information; press 2 for the most commonly asked questions" etc.

Dr Untinen goes on, if you are following along in the written presentation, to provide a list of the various services which, in her work with Decade Council, she has experienced an MPP being called on to look into. It's a long list and I won't go into it, because I think many people have been touching on that.

These tasks are in addition to the northern politicians' duties as they pertain to representing their constituency in the Legislature, representing government at the constituency level, committee work, caucus tasks and other prescribed duties. Demands for the participation of a northern MPP does not mean they have to cross several city blocks between appearances as it may in downtown Toronto. It often means travelling many hazardous miles on the area's highways or jumping on an airplane to cover the longer distances.

We in northwestern Ontario have seen our government services downsized and removed from our area at an alarming rate by the present government. Area management for community and social services are, and soon the crown attorney management offices will be, hundreds of

miles away from all northwestern Ontario communities. Those are two services which at Decade Council we have found are vital to the wellbeing of women up here, because of the issue of the feminization of poverty and also because of the issue of violence towards women. We are devastated that those offices have been taken away from us.

We have seen change for the sake of change. Family support offices have left the region, with devastating results for many families. That a woman and her children should have to use a food bank because the father will not pay is outrageous. For them to have to use that same food bank because of her government's bureaucratic bungling is scandalous.

The Ontario government is neglecting the infrastructure of northwestern Ontario, removing local services and protection from area communities, privatizing basic health and safety services such as the MTO, tearing apart the social fabric of the region, forcing amalgamation of regional communities without local decision-making and now, through Bill 81, the government is determined to silence our voice.

Northwestern Ontario is presently represented by five provincial representatives from the ridings of Kenora, Rainy River, Fort William, Port Arthur and Lake Nipigon. There are only four federal representatives from the ridings of Kenora-Rainy River, Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Thunder Bay-Nipigon and Cochrane-Superior.

Supporters of Bill 81 would pose the question, if four representatives are sent to the federal government, why not at the provincial level? While the federal government is responsible for developing national policies and developing some national programs, the provincial government is directly responsible for issues and many services that affect citizens' lives and are delivered community by community. Therefore, there are far more demands and heightened emotional responses to provincial issues. Several people today have been making the point that we take our politics seriously in the north. That is because we have fewer services and we're far away from the decision-making and our lives are impacted, especially in the case of women, I believe, by our lack of access to service. Input into education, health and social services cannot be removed from the people.

Taxation with representation is a right for all Ontarians. Reducing northern representation by one third for an area which constitutes 87% of the provincial land mass threatens this basic right. We heard the previous speaker talking about the communities along the northern CN rail line, such as Aroland and Collins and those places. As social workers and also through involvement with Decade Council, we've had occasion to try to get to those communities. It really is a question of a train goes one way one day and then back the other day. Increasing the amount of communities that an MPP has to represent is truly taking away service and representation from some of the people who live in communities with the least services, with the highest level of sexual abuse of children, with high levels of violence against women. These are communities with profound, serious social problems.

The merging of the Kenora and Rainy River ridings to a single riding covering one third of Ontario places an oppressive workload on any elected official who is committed to providing adequate representation for his constituency. Travel requirements would be exhaustive and expensive and would defeat the purpose of the plan to reduce costs.

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An expansion of the Port Arthur riding will see the constituency embrace nine additional communities as well as many more first nation reserves. This elected representative will be expected to respond to the needs of urban citizens from the city of Thunder Bay, rural suburb concerns from areas such as the municipality of Shuniah, issues from small towns such as those located along the Trans-Canada Highway, concerns from more isolated villages, for example, Nakina, and the issues of first nation people living throughout the region on and off reserves, urban, rural and semi-isolated.

Expanding Fort William riding will only serve to distribute a heavier workload to the representative and absorbing much of the Rainy River riding gives the present government the added pleasure of slighting both opposition leaders by inference that they could and should have been serving many additional constituents.

Abolishing the Lake Nipigon riding shows disregard for the citizens of that constituency and ignores the geography and distance involved. These special circumstances probably contributed to the original establishment of the riding.

In conclusion, redistribution and the drawing of provincial electoral boundaries based on population alone and ignoring the immense geographical area and the distance to be travelled to cover the ridings in northwestern Ontario is one more made-in-Toronto solution imposed on the north.

Unfortunately, the result of the last election demonstrated that the present provincial government had nothing to offer to the north. Northwestern Ontario had and will continue to have the least representation in the Ontario Legislature. Further, decreasing our representation shows a continued lack of awareness for area needs and realities, an apathy regarding our unique circumstances and disrespect for our citizens and their voice in the governance of our province.

As I noted, Dr Untinen actually wrote this and I only saw it yesterday, but I will do my best to answer questions.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Mather. We have some questions. We'll divide it into 10 minutes, starting with the government.

Mrs Ross: Thank you very much for your presentation. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions. First of all, I'd like to talk about where you talk about women and children and deadbeat parents and that sort of thing. I think our government is the first government to introduce tough enforcement measures against deadbeat fathers, and I'm very proud of the efforts we're taking in that area with respect to taking away drivers' licences, tapping into 50% of their bank accounts, tapping into commissions, draws and that sort of thing. I think we're doing a lot to help women and children of this province.

I just want to make that clear, that that bill is doing exactly what we said we would do and crack down on deadbeat parents.

But I want to talk about this bill. I mentioned to the last presenter that in fact northern Ontario does have greater representation. If you believe that all Ontarians deserve fair and equal representation, then you'd have to believe in representation by population. If you believe in that, what we've done and what the federal government has done with its boundaries is allow for the geographic areas by increasing that representation, so that in some ridings the population is 20% less than it would be in some southern Ontario ridings or even more than that in some cases.

The other thing is that in northern Ontario there are 41 Ministry of Northern Development and Mines offices. There are 29 northern development offices each at an average cost of \$117,000. So there are lots of other support mechanisms for people in the north. Do you not feel that just those two offices alone, 41 ministry offices and 29 northern development, are helpful supports for people of the north?

Ms Mather: Dr Untinen's presentation is concerned with northwestern Ontario, and I think perhaps some of the figures that you're quoting are for the north as a whole. I'm glad that you're proud of the efforts that your government is making to help women. Unfortunately, they don't pan out in the real world.

Mrs Ross: Well, you'll see they will.

Ms Mather: I think fair and equal representation based solely on population is an impossibility. I need from my government a more sophisticated analysis. I need an analysis based on the level of services provided within the community and the degree of difficulty that the elected representative is going to have in getting from community to community.

Mrs Ross: Let me ask you something then. Let me just look at these figures here.

Ms Mather: Oh, I didn't answer your question, did I? You had one more point. It was three questions in one, wasn't it?

Mrs Ross: That's okay.

Ms Mather: I beg your pardon. The third question that you asked me was, did I find that the offices were helpful? Certainly they're helpful, but they're not enough.

Mrs Ross: Okay. Let me ask you, if, for example, let's do Kenora-Rainy River: 20.65%. If that's not enough difference, what is enough for northern Ontario? How much more representation do you need with respect to more than what they have in the south?

Ms Mather: That is the question. That's a question that is not going to be answered by reliance on a federal process of determining boundaries. That's a question that's not going to be answered by three days worth of hearings. It's a question that I can't answer. That's a question that needs to be looked at by all three parties — you guys too. I'm not saying, "Let's not talk to the Conservatives." I'm not saying, "Let's only talk to the northern members." I'm saying, "Let's have a truly intensive process." I can't answer that, and the reason I can't is because I'm not enough to answer it and neither is the process used by the federal government.

Mr Gravelle: Thank you, Chris. Certainly you've conveyed for Dr Untinen — it's really a well-researched, detailed brief with some more information too, and I think the responsibilities of a provincial member are well outlined, and the list just keeps on growing.

We got back to the bottom line again with Mrs Ross in terms of what's going to be enough. I must admit that in terms of this specific bill, I would maintain that the answer is they should maintain the level of provincial ridings that we have now.

Setting up a provincial commission would seem to make sense, and I think that's what you were in essence talking about. Have you got any thoughts on how it could be set up? It's not too late, is it? If there was a genuine desire to especially have the hearings today have an effect — because I don't know what else we can say. Do you, Chris?

Ms Mather: No.

Mr Gravelle: We've been listening all day and the point has been made as strongly as possible, so it seems to me that a commission might be the answer.

Ms Mather: I've been here twice today, once as an advocate for low-income people and once as an advocate for women. Please, stop this process and hold real hearings into the real issues. We get told a lot that the government members are dominated by Mr Harris and his coterie. Mr Hardeman is shaking his head that this is not true. If it's not true, Mr Hardeman, you must be able to see from the presentations today that we don't agree with you. If in fact you do have the nerve to go up against Mr Harris, then do it, Mr Hardeman. We can't be any clearer that we don't want this, that we don't think it will work. We can't be any clearer.

Mr Len Wood: Take up the challenge, Ernie.

Mr Young: Did you hear the previous speakers?

Ms Mather: Yes. I've been here since 9 o'clock.

Mr Mclash: Mr Chair.

Mr Gravelle: Speaking of the previous speaker, Chris, I know that you were sitting back there rather aghast listening to the previous speaker as well.

Ms Mather: I think she's running.

Mr Gravelle: The one question I would have asked her if I'd had the chance was that she talked about extensive public consultation. This is a really good example of this government's vision or description of consultation. They put forward a bill and say, "This is the way it's going to be and then we'll talk to you afterwards," and that's if they talk to you afterwards. We did have to fight like blazes to get hearings. It's obviously the only chance we had. But this is not consultation in any legitimate sense, because it's also been made very clear that nothing's going to change. There will be no boundary changes. Sorry, Chris.

Ms Mather: I guess we're talking about the process of today, and what's really concerned me is that somebody like the previous lady got up to speak, and I don't know her but it sure sounded like party line rhetoric to me, yet what we've heard from the government members today when anybody presents something that doesn't agree with Bill 81, it's called rhetoric. That's been thrown at me a couple of times. It's not. It's issue-based, not rhetoric.

The Acting Chair: Mr Hampton. Would you make your remarks through the Chair too, Ms Mather.

Ms Mather: I didn't know we were to be that formal. Sorry.

Mr Hampton: Chris, in the brief, you outline some services that have already been reduced. You point to the fact that there's no longer going to be a director of crown attorneys office in northwestern Ontario any more. That's being taken out. The family support plan regional office was closed. Correct me if I'm wrong. The Ministry of Environment labs have been closed, the Ministry of Transportation offices are being closed, the Comsoc area office in Thunder Bay has been closed, and I believe the Ministry of Education regional office in Thunder Bay is also being closed.

Part of what the government believes is that you can make these decisions in Toronto. I want to ask you, if all of these decisions are simply made in Toronto, if what the government creates is a large, centralized bureaucracy in Toronto, how do you think those decisions will affect northwestern Ontario and how do you think people in northwestern Ontario will react to those decisions?

1550

Ms Mather: Through you, Mr Chair, to the leader of the New Democratic Party, I think it's going to be disastrous for us, because we are different. In my work, I have occasion to travel to Toronto probably once every six weeks. I'm in touch with a lot of different social agencies and organizations, educational groups and health groups there. I'm usually the token northerner. It's a completely different reality. Decisions about education can't be made in Toronto; decisions about health in the north can't be made in Toronto. I won't bother listing all the ministries we've lost.

I want to give you a personal story. I had a daughter murdered two and a half years ago in Thunder Bay. Obviously it was a very, very tragic situation. Our family got tremendous support from the head crown attorney located in Thunder Bay: immediate access to information that we needed, the ability to advocate for information to be provided to us. I wouldn't want to go through the court process that I went through around the trial for the murder of my daughter with the head office being — is it Sudbury they've moved it to? I think it's Sudbury, isn't it?

Mr Hampton: It will either be Sudbury or Toronto.

Ms Mather: I wouldn't want to do that, and I want to introduce that as a personal thing. I can't afford to travel for personal reasons like that to talk to somebody.

Mr Hampton: The other element that the government keeps coming back to is it seems to confuse MPPs, elected representatives, with government. The fact of the matter is that the government is the cabinet and the bureaucracy that cabinet creates under it. That's becoming a centralized bureaucracy in Toronto.

The real role of members of the Legislature is to hold the bureaucracy and to hold the Premier and his cabinet ministers accountable, to ensure that decisions that are made by that government and made by that bureaucracy respond to the needs of people. When you see the government creating this large, centralized, nameless, faceless bureaucracy in Toronto and at the same time

reducing the number of watchers, the number of people who can hold that bureaucracy accountable, what does that leave you with as somebody who has to deal with real people's problems? What's your sense of that? How do you feel about that? How do you think it's going to work?

Ms Mather: Through you, Mr Chair, to the leader of the New Democratic Party, I feel two things about it. I feel dismay about it because it's going to make my job harder and it's going to make Decade Council's job harder. I also don't understand it, because this is a government which talks a lot about being accountable and making sure that efficiencies happen and so on. It seems to me kind of contradictory to take away — I think somebody earlier referred to MPPs as watchdogs of the bureaucracy. To me, it doesn't make sense to take away the number of watchdogs if you campaigned on a platform of making sure that efficiencies took place.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Mather, for coming and doing a very good job the second time.

Mr Stewart: Mr Chair, on a point of privilege: We've heard a lot about made-in-Toronto solutions and hidden agendas and the urban part of this province directing all of the decision-making. I would like the record to say that there are four government members on this panel from rural Ontario.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Stewart.

UDO STASCHIK

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mr Udo Staschik. I hope I have pronounced your name correctly, sir.

Mr Udo Staschik: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to this committee. For 10 years I've been a resident in the community of Keewatin, located in the present provincial riding of Kenora. I'm working in the field of community-oriented housing, community and infrastructure development. Over the last few years I was involved in more than 50 projects in dozens of communities located in the Kenora, Rainy River, Lake Nipigon and part of the Thunder Bay ridings. Drawing from these personal experiences, I'm expressing my opinions regarding the provincial riding boundary changes.

I believe the standing committee should take the following aspects into consideration. I know I'm going to repeat some of the issues that were addressed before.

Decreasing the representation of northern ridings will increase the alienation of northern communities. Ontario is not only Metro Toronto and the greater Toronto area.

The anticipated cost saving will not be realized, but merely downloaded to the residents of the new extended ridings.

Thirdly, the new demographic composition generated by the amalgamation of the Kenora and Rainy River ridings has the potential to create an imbalance in representing first nation communities and non-native communities.

The possible amalgamation of the present Kenora and Rainy River ridings is only one more small part in a much bigger development affecting northern Ontario. Due to the provincial cost-cutting and streamlining of government operations, more and more services are withdrawn

from northern communities. The constituency offices of the elected members of provincial Parliament increasingly have to serve as community-based resource centres linking northern residents with a decision-making process in the south. Fortunately, the constituency offices of the present MPPs are meeting this new challenge and the staff of the constituency office are able to provide referral services and access to information.

By merging northern ridings, local MPPs will not be able to provide the required services to the population at large. The new riding of Kenora-Rainy River will encompass more than 50 first nation communities and more than 25 municipal councils and local service boards. Representation of specific northern Ontario issues at Queen's Park will be drastically diminished and area residents will have less access to their elected representatives.

Since the Conservative government took power in Ontario, communities in northern Ontario experience an increasing feeling of alienation. Solutions based on urban areas or on Toronto experiences do not work in our northern part of the province. Not surprisingly, many conversations related to the issue of Toronto dominating political decisions for all residents in Ontario end with the following conclusion: Maybe residents of northern Ontario have to define their own political future. The term "creating an independent northern Ontario" was expressed in various conversations, and even local politicians and news media are aware and supportive of this tendency.

I do think the proposed riding amalgamation and the diminished representation at Queen's Park will foster this feeling of unease with the existing political structure. After all, the term "democracy" in its original Greek context means "government for people," not government against people.

The Conservative government was elected with a clear mandate of cutting the cost of operating government in Ontario. The amalgamation of the ridings of Kenora and Rainy River is supposed to save the taxpayer approximately \$100,000 per year. In my opinion, the term "saving" is incorrect and should be replaced with the term "downloading of expenses." The elected member has to service a vast area. Travel costs will skyrocket and each community in the new amalgamated riding will experience a lack of access to the elected MPP.

Consequently, concerned citizens, elected municipal officials and representatives of interest groups will have to travel to meet local MPPs at central locations. This is the best explanation for the concept of downloading. Instead of the government guaranteeing equal access for all residents across the riding, it will be the responsibility and cost of each resident to bring his or her opinion or concern to the elected member of provincial Parliament. Groups or persons with the most financial resources will have the best access and possibilities to meet and discuss issues with the MPP. Excluded are residents in remote communities or residents not having the time or financial means to spend money on travel.

These limitations to access, the resources of the local MPP and his or her constituency office staff are contradictory to the principle of democracy and fair and equal treatment of all residents in Ontario.

The demographic makeup of a new, amalgamated Kenora-Rainy River riding is extremely unique. The farming community in Rainy River, the mining community in Red Lake and the remote fly-in first nations community have the right to be represented in a fair and balanced way. I believe any restructuring of provincial riding boundaries has to take this diversity into consideration and not merely adjust the sizes of ridings according to the number of residents or eligible voters.

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An estimated 30% of the 52,000 eligible voters in the new amalgamated riding will be residing in first nations communities or be of native ancestry. Taking the future growth of the eligible voter population into account, this percentage will increase at a dramatic rate. In my experience these communities have a very different social, economic and political agenda, and demographics are different: age structure, employment levels, average household composition, income average, poverty levels, as well as general community and infrastructure development.

In my opinion it is the responsibility of the provincial government to take the specific conditions of the Kenora-Rainy River riding into consideration before realigning the riding boundaries. Having only one elected member in the Ontario provincial Parliament to represent the diverse interests of approximately 50 first nations communities as well as 25 municipal councils and local service boards seems unrealistic, and in my opinion will not give any fitting representation to the diverse nature of northern Ontario communities, the social fabric and individual residents.

Mr Miclash: Thank you for your presentation. You may have to explain to some of the members here where Keewatin is. I'm sure a lot of them don't know. As was discussed on the airplane on the way up, certain members didn't know whether Dryden was before Kenora, so you may have to explain to them where that is. It happens to be a little community on the other side of Kenora.

I think you bring up a good point in terms of imbalance in the representation of the first nations communities, particularly those north of the 51st parallel. I mentioned a good number of times today the fact that when it comes to the federal boundaries, we know there was a federal boundaries commission that took a close look at that. Could you maybe give the committee some comments as to how you would see a provincial boundaries commission taking a look at the aspect we as a committee are looking at today; not only that, but maybe some of the guidelines or some involvement that other people may have?

Mr Staschik: One of the main points in terms of a boundary commission in northern Ontario simply would be a meeting between people living here in this area. It is very important that southern Ontario is represented, but the majority of people have to be from the north and they have to be out of the groups I mentioned before: from the farming community, the mining community, somebody from remote fly-in first nations communities and the more urban centres. People in southern Ontario might not realize it, but Dryden and Kenora are the urban centres here.

In the case of people who don't know Keewatin, it's quite interesting. I think Keewatin and Kenora are two of the few places in Ontario from where I'm can do my major shopping in Winnipeg and I cannot access any government offices that would provide services to me. If you live, as an example, in Peterborough and go shopping in Metro Toronto you could always go to some office there and apply for your driver's licence or for whatever you want to do. For me, living in Kenora or Keewatin, it is 200 kilometres to go shopping in Winnipeg but I can't do anything. If I want to have any provincial services which are not provided in Kenora I have to go 500 kilometres in the other direction to Thunder Bay.

I think some areas in the existing Rainy River riding, with Fort Frances and the town of Rainy River, going to the United States for some of their business might have the same problem.

Mr Miclash: It's a good point you bring up, and I've heard a number of times that constituents in the rural ridings we've talked about before, and northern ridings, certainly have to depend on their constituency offices a lot more. That point has come out many times today. I just hope the government members are listening to that fact and will see fit for changes in this bill.

Mr Staschik: I just want to mention that yesterday the only place where I was able to find a map of Ontario that has the proposed boundaries and actual electoral districts was in Mr Miclash's office. There was nothing in any other offices representing the province, like The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Even the library didn't have anything. I had to use his office as the resource centre that was available to me at that time.

Mr Miclash: I reinforce the fact that we're used to doing that because, as you stated, the other offices aren't down the street for you to make use of. We've certainly gone in that direction, as I'm sure Mr Hampton's office has as well.

Mr Hampton: Udo, I want to come back to some comments you made and that I now hear often as well. We're beginning to see in newspapers, in some of the literature we read in northern Ontario, comments like, "It is time for a separate province of northern Ontario," or comments like, "It's time that we think about not being part of Ontario because Ontario doesn't seem to want us." How often are you hearing that and why do you think you're hearing that?

Mr Staschik: Over the last year and a half I hear it quite a bit in very informal conversations. I read it six or eight weeks ago in the Kenora newspaper. That was the first time it was brought up in public. I read it in the Winnipeg Free Press. I saw it on TV with Mr Benoit Serré, I think, out of the Temagami-Timiskaming area, and this reflects in personal conversations I have with my friends, with people I'm dealing with, and I'm very surprised about that. I think the example, and I don't want to get political here, of Quebec should give us enough of a scare in Canada that people are not happy with the existing political situation.

Don't misunderstand me. I don't want to say that the boundary changes of ridings in northern Ontario are similar to the Quebec issue. But I think at the present time the feeling of being fed up with decisions coming

from outside the regions is very strong and that the existing Conservative government in Ontario might get a rude awakening not necessarily meant against the existing government. It could be a process that started 20 or 30 years ago that is just getting to the point where it's unbearable at the present time.

I cannot talk on behalf of first nations communities, I'm not living in any of the first nations communities, but I do most of my work in these communities and I get the impression that native communities feel even more alienated than we feel at the present time.

1610

Mr Hampton: Let me ask you this, Udo: Part of what the government is doing is going to increase the distance between citizens and their elected representatives and it's going to increase the distance between citizens and the government in Queen's Park. What do you think could be the effect of increasing that distance? What do you think the effect of that can or might be, given the kinds of things you're already reading in the press, given the kinds of conversations that people are already having about, "We don't feel welcome here; we don't feel a part of what's happening"?

Mr Staschik: It will be a selected group of people, the ones with money, who have access to government services. I'll give you an example. In Kenora I'm working in the field of housing, in particular. There were cuts in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and one of the cuts affected the Kenora housing centre. That centre was dealing with people who could not find any proper accommodation, people who had problems with the Landlord and Tenant Act who were being evicted and not able to get any proper solution.

This office in Kenora was closed. The only other existing office is in Toronto, but people who are about to be evicted or who have problems with the Landlord and Tenant Act are not persistent enough to talk with a 1-800 voice mail and actually get an answer. These will be the problems of distance in ridings.

Mr Young: You mentioned that the word "democracy" means government by the people. A very important part of that formula is that one person should get one vote. I support this current formula although it gives northerners — your weighting of your vote is greater. The things we heard about today, the weather and the distances, are the concerns they raised. But I grew up in the city and I have to tell you there are problems in the cities too.

We've heard a lot today about 50 first nations. There are ridings in Toronto where there are 50 languages spoken and there are unique problems related to assimilation of new immigrants. Crime is higher, there are housing shortages, there are transportation concerns, and I could go on.

Some of those people, would say, "We need greater representation to deal with those problems." We came in at about 10 o'clock last night, and I took a walk along the highway and I began to get — it's my eighth time up here in the north — a better understanding of why people live here. The environment, it's so quiet; it's beautiful. I know people live here because there are sports, and the

lifestyle, the quality of life is greater, there are fewer traffic problems and you don't have to deal with crowds.

I was shocked to find, the first time I came up here, that people don't even lock their doors. Throughout my whole life you couldn't go anywhere without locking a door. So there are great advantages to living in the north too.

How can I answer people who are saying they want an absolutely equal vote? They don't want you to have a 20% greater weighting on your vote. How do you answer those people? We have to answer to them as well.

Mr Staschik: I realize that. I think you underestimate the microcosm that is happening in northern Ontario. There is by no means the violence, nor are there the problems you see in certain Toronto or southern Ontario neighbourhoods, but when you go on a per-capita level I think you might reach the same. Keewatin has 1,800 inhabitants, and I think there were one or two murders last year. If you take that in the entire proportion and extrapolate it to the Toronto area there might not be that much of a difference. We have a population in the trimunicipal area of approximately 10,000 or 15,000 people, but there are about 200 people of ethnic background who immigrated to Canada and came to Kenora within the last four or five years.

Mr Young: So you're saying it's no different from the cities —

Mr Staschik: Yes, it is different in terms of numbers, but in terms —

Mr Young: It's more difficult?

Mr Staschik: What I want to say is if you look at the percentage base, I dare to say it's not that much different.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you very much for your presentation. On the same line of questioning, you mentioned in your presentation that the government was elected to reduce the bureaucracy in government. I just want to add to that that I think they were also elected to reduce the size of government from the top down, including the elected officials.

Having assumed that to be the fact, and of course recognizing, as we've heard all day today, that there's a relationship to elected representatives and geography, if we are to accept that the present representation in the north is appropriate — I don't know whether you would agree to go that far, but let's assume we agree it is appropriate — and that we also have to reduce the number of elected officials and the size of government, would you support increasing the difference for the voice of the individual by increasing the population per representative in southern Ontario in order to accommodate keeping the north the way it is?

Mr Staschik: Basically, in my mind this would be a better idea. I know you're going to say in terms of cost-cutting it wouldn't work, but with our representation here I think we are at the bare minimum politically. Maybe there is a reason nobody with the Conservative Party got elected in northern Ontario, because we are aware that we could not handle a further reduction in the ridings. Maybe that's why only one person got elected in the north, because we had to trust Mr Miclash, Mr Wood and Mr Hampton more than Lynn Beyak, who was talking here half an hour ago. Maybe we were concerned about that.

Mr Hardeman: So you're suggesting, from what I hear, that financially it wouldn't work. In my opinion, financially it would work if you reduced 27 members all in the Metro area. The cost savings would be the same. I have a question about how you would deem that to be fair and appropriate to those people who would be losing the representation, who are already underrepresented by population to the extreme, and that we would put the other 10% on those.

Mr Staschik: I think I misunderstood you. My suggestion was keeping our representation in northern Ontario and increasing the amount of ridings in southern Ontario to make it fit to the existing population growth. I'm increasing the amount of MPPs.

Mr Hardeman: But how do we get back to your statement that you agreed that the government was elected to reduce government?

Mr Staschik: This was a statement. It was just a statement.

Mr Hardeman: If that's what they were elected to do, how would that scenario, to increase the size of government, do that?

Mr Staschik: Maybe that's why you didn't get elected in the north, because of exactly this statement.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Staschik, for a very intriguing and balanced treatment.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mr Guinn, from the Northwestern Ontario Small Business Association.

Mr Douglas Guinn: Many of the areas I was going to talk about have already been spoken on here today, so there's no sense in going over them again. I'm sure everybody's taken them into consideration.

Frankly speaking, the Northwestern Ontario Small Business Association is very happy with the Conservative government. Any of our concerns they have addressed quite readily for us. We're really happy with your taking 1,000 rules off of small business — or you're going to — getting out of our way and letting us operate. We think that will create jobs and give us prosperity in northwestern Ontario. However, we do have concerns about the riding boundaries and the number of members.

The federal boundaries were drawn up by the Liberals. Will they really save \$1.3 million? That's what we want to know. Let us not forget gun controls and Mr Allan Rock's promise that it would cost \$85 million; the cost will be \$750 million to \$1.4 billion. So what the Liberals tell us, I think we'd better watch out.

The loss of seats is a concern to all northwestern Ontario people, because no matter who controls the seats they are important. Our MPPs, whether they're opposition or government members, I've always found approachable and willing to work with you. I think that's a good thing for northwestern Ontario. But the public has lost faith in politicians. In my job, I travel I guess more than anybody in this room into northwestern Ontario, different areas, up into Kenora, Manitouwadge, Geraldton, Nakina. Whenever I'm talking to people, they all say: "What's the

difference? A politician, they're worried about these seats. What's the difference if we have them or not? The politicians don't do anything for us. When they get elected, they're there to represent themselves. They won't vote against their own government because they're afraid they won't get promoted to cabinet." I think there are many things in government we have to change, and that's one of them, especially in northwestern Ontario. We've seen that in the Liberal gun bill up here. They certainly didn't support the voters who supported them, or our will.

1620

Our concerns will be to have enough members to represent us. We feel that these members do speak for northwestern Ontario. What we are concerned about in northwestern Ontario — our economy is based on lumber and mining, mainly, and that is just about our entire economy. But where are we going to go in the future when all these resources run out? What's going to happen to northwestern Ontario? Are we going to become another Elliot Lake or Bancroft? I'm afraid that's what's going to happen. We see Thunder Bay already has 800 houses for sale in it right now. The population's beginning to leave northwestern Ontario. How are we going to work to hold this population here? That's a big quest for us, to try to come up with some answers about how to hold this population here. I think we need lots of representation to solve these problems up here.

I have talked to people in Nipigon and they are concerned that they are losing their vote, that Thunder Bay will control the vote and they will lose out on the vote, and they're very disappointed with it. I can well see our riding has expanded up into the Albany River area. I hunt up in the Albany area and Ogoki Lake and Ogoki west every year. To get to these areas, it's 167 miles to Geraldton, 60 miles from there to Nakina, 45 miles by air to Ogoki Lake or 100 miles to the Albany River. It is quite a big riding and quite hard to handle.

I do talk to the native people up there when I'm up there and to the residents, and they too say, "What the hell's the sense in voting?" That's what the people are beginning to say.

I am concerned and I think we all should be concerned about the independence rights movement starting to move again in northwestern Ontario: one more time a new province. I haven't heard that mentioned here today and I'm very surprised that nobody brought it up, but I am concerned about this. It looks like they're after Mike Power from Geraldton to head it up and start the movement again. I think we should all be concerned about this, because the people are dissatisfied and it's beginning to show again. We had better get our house in order up here and come forward with something for the people of northwestern Ontario so they feel they belong to Ontario.

I was born in Scarborough, but I came up here 30 years ago because it is a beautiful country and a beautiful area and the people are really nice up here. It is a special way of living up here. It is remoteness, everything. We have to do something to keep the people here so we can continue on with this great portion of northwestern Ontario in the Ontario government.

As I say, we are happy with the Conservative government, no doubt about it. They are going to create jobs,

they are going to get this province moving again. But we do look forward to more support in northwestern Ontario, and I'm sure it's going to come.

That's about it. That's all I've got to say.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Guinn. We have five minutes for each caucus, starting with Mr Hampton.

Mr Hampton: I'm interested in your comment that there are about 800 houses for sale already in Thunder Bay. Why do you feel that is? What's happening that so many people are putting their homes on the real estate market?

Mr Guinn: As you know, if you're 25 and under in northwestern Ontario, you can't find a job. It's very difficult for the young. I think the people are just deciding they're going to move to a more prosperous area and try to keep the families together. Instead of splitting up their families, maybe their parents will move out too. I know one family that's doing that from Nipigon. He sold his house in Nipigon and he owns a house in Thunder Bay — he's living there now — and he is presently going to move out west because two sons and a daughter have moved out there and the family wants to be together. I think that would be one reason we're losing population.

Mr Hampton: Do you think it might have something to do with the fact that the Ministry of Environment lab has been closed? I understand about 60 people are affected by that. The Ministry of Natural Resources regional office has been downsized; I believe there are about 40 people affected by that. The family support plan office has been closed, and I believe 20 people were affected by that. The regional Ministry of Education office has been closed, and I believe 20 people were affected by that. I understand that Confederation College has laid off 60-some staff and that Lakehead University has either laid off or early retired some 100 people. Do you think it has something to do with those things?

Mr Guinn: I don't know, but I think all those jobs are a false economy. Those jobs are all created — government creates jobs. I recall Mr Wilson saying that there were 270 people working in the hospital billing department when they took over. Those people weren't required because the doctors bill electronically, so 270 people were laid off. That was the reason. They weren't required and it was just a matter of making jobs. When government money goes into jobs, that's my money, my tax dollars that went there. Our association members are taxfighters too, and that's why we are taxfighters, because we're paying too much. Small business is having a hard job to survive; 62,000 small businesses went under this year in Canada. What's happening to us?

Mr Hampton: I understand the bankruptcy rate is actually going up. It's up by 20% over last year.

Mr Guinn: Yes.

Mr Hampton: Part of the reason I think people in northern Ontario are starting to feel a bit upset is that when the Ministry of Transportation office goes, the Ministry of Environment laboratory goes, the MNE offices go, the family support plan office goes, the director of crown attorneys job goes, the regional Ministry of Education office goes, people realize that meaningful decisions won't be made here any more, decisions won't

be made in northwestern Ontario, because the people who used to make those decisions and who would have the legal authority to make those decisions are gone.

Mr Guinn: That could be, but I must remind you of Cliff McIntosh's article in the paper that Thunder Bay in 2020 would be 80,000 people. Did you ever read that one?

Mr Hampton: I read Mr McIntosh's comments from time to time. I remember him predicting 10 years ago that the forest industry would be shut down by now. I do read his articles.

Mr Guinn: In 2020 we'll be out of virgin forest in Canada.

Mr Hampton: We may be.

Mr Guinn: It's a fact.

Mr Hampton: We may be. We may in fact be cutting our second forest. My point is, do you think people are right to be concerned about all these decision-making bodies, all these decision-making offices leaving our region? If they're leaving our region, where do you think the decisions are now going to be made?

Mr Guinn: The decisions used to be made in Toronto before. When I first came up to Thunder Bay they were made in Toronto, before jobs were moved from Toronto up to the outlying areas. When the first big shopping mall was built in Thunder Bay, I was opposed to that. Claude Bennett was the housing minister at the time, and I told him at a meeting, "All you've done for us, Claude" — I liked Thunder Bay the way it was — "is up our taxes and the costs of articles sold in the stores. That's all you've done for us."

1630

The Acting Chair: Thank you. We have questioners now: Mr Young, Mr Stewart, Mr Tascona and Mrs Ross. You've got five minutes, so you guys and gals act accordingly.

Mr Young: I'll be quick. There are a number of things, as you know, that we've done to make it easier to do business so those jobs are created, freezing hydro rates and red tape. You mentioned one of them. Another is taking \$4 million that government spent and putting it back into consumers' hands. But I think the potential is already starting to show with the increase in prospecting in the north for mining and resources and tourism.

One of the things we did for tourism — the bill was just passed this week — was Bill 75. I was up here on committee and in Thunder Bay the people in the restaurants and the hotels pleaded with the committee — they've got four buses a day that go to a casino in Minnesota — and they said, "We want to keep those people here." The member couldn't make it to vote for the bill and never said anything positive about the bill in the House. Now, there's the kind of representation you've had in the north.

As well, we were in Kenora and they pleaded, same thing, they said, "We really need an edge to build tourism and get visitors from the States etc." Do you have any comments on that?

Mr Guinn: On tourism, when we were hunting this year the four Americans who were in camp before us said they weren't coming back. Then when we were flying

out, a man, about 74 years old I'd say, from Lindsay and his son, and the other son was flying in later on on the airplane to take our place in the camp, they didn't bring a chainsaw. So we were looking at their stuff and saying, "How come you haven't got a chainsaw?" "What do we need a chainsaw for?" "To cut wood. You're going to freeze here tonight." They didn't bring an axe. Nobody told them to bring an axe.

The airplane was taking off with our saw and that, but when it came back we asked the pilot — it was Dave Kyro flying — "You've got to bring back our chainsaw and our axe for these people, and our file." He said, "Why?" I said, "They need wood for tonight." He says, "I got 22 people more to bring out, I can't get back yet." I said, "Well, you've got to." Then we spread out our map and we began to show them all the areas where to hunt. If they want to avoid danger, go this side of the rapids and things like that.

When we got in the airplane, Dave says to us, "Tell me, why would you people be willing to show them all the hunting spots and loan them your equipment when you don't even know them?" We said, "Because that's our future, that's tourism, that's what we're going to have to build this economy on." And he said, "Then you should go out and tell the rest of northwestern Ontario that because they want to hog all the moose and all the fish for themselves." That's what he said.

Mr Stewart: Thank you. You made reference, and a presenter earlier did, about the big fear with changing of ridings was that the new members might only be from the populated areas and it wouldn't be fair for the outlying areas, and I just want to make one comment. In the riding of Victoria-Haliburton, which is the main city of Lindsay, the man elected is from Haliburton. In Orillia, he's elected from Oro. In Oshawa-Durham East, he's elected from Clarington. In my own riding, Peterborough being the biggest one, I'm from Otonabee township. Picton, a chap from just in the rural area. I have difficulty believing that type of rationale. Could you make an additional comment on that?

Mr Guinn: It's entirely different up here. We were in for seven days on the airplane flight. We were supposed to go in on Saturday, we wanted to be home for Thanksgiving, but we couldn't get out for two days. The sun was shining and everything. We thought the airplane was coming for us, but there was so much turbulence, whenever they would take off from Geraldton in the air, he said he came out one day and he had about 15 minutes in the air and he had to come back to Geraldton base. That's the difference. At one time the federal government was going to set up four weather stations around here in the different areas, because different areas like Marathon will have different weather than Geraldton will have and so on.

Mr Stewart: But what I'm saying is the MPP who might be elected, there seems to be concern if this boundary changes they will only be elected from the major centres. We heard this before. Thunder Bay will be the only people that will ever be able to elect an MPP because of concentration of population.

Mr Guinn: Yes, right.

Mr Stewart: But it's proven, certainly in southern Ontario, that there are 43 rural MPPs, most of whom are not elected in the main towns or cities in their ridings.

Mr Guinn: Well, that could be, but you've got a bigger population, haven't you?

Mr Stewart: Yes, I know but —

Mr Guinn: We've only got 55,000 voters, and taking in this riding there'll be 2,000 more voters, so that would give all told 57,000. In that entire distance there'll only be 2,000 more voters.

Mr Stewart: Yes, I know, but —

The Acting Chair: Mr Tascona.

Mr Tascona: I'd just like to ask you a question on the role of the members. Certainly the private sector has downsized, the provincial government is downsizing in terms of doing better for less. Certainly, leading by example, the MPPs should be doing something in that direction also, and that's what this bill is about. You made your comments about politicians thinking about themselves. Do you feel we will get better representation by having fewer politicians in terms of getting away from the squabbles we have and trying to do a better job with less?

Mr Guinn: No. Personally, I don't really know, but I think we need representation. I think this area is a lot different than everybody says because of the travelling. Like us travelling from Thunder Bay to here is 250 miles. So we've got to spend a whole day travelling back and forth. It's a big difference than being in Toronto where you've got your mass of population all in apartments buildings and that. It's easier to control —

Mr Tascona: But the thing is in Toronto at the federal level they have the same number that we will have provincially, but a federal member does not have the support system, the other levels of government like school boards, municipalities, district councils. I could go on and on in terms of the other levels to which an individual has input through their provincial member. As one member says here, the MPP should be the watchdog dealing with bureaucracy. The federal members have the same thing too, but a provincial member has greater mechanisms to deal with the input. That's what we're getting at here in terms of the provincial member's role in a provincial setting.

Mr Guinn: Yes, but if we lose five seats, how would we have more input?

Mr Tascona: When you have less members to compete with in terms of resources you'd have greater input. You'd have less members from Toronto and other areas. You'd have 22 less members from the other areas, so you would have greater input proportionally.

Mr Miclash: Doug, thank you very much for your contribution to the hearings here this afternoon. Just to sum it up, can I assume that you're suggesting that these members, to all of us actually, we should go back and, just looking at what this entire bill is doing to northern Ontario, vote against this legislation? Am I reading that correctly?

Mr Guinn: What I'm trying to sum up and say is before they go into this to really look at it, I would like them to address our future in northwestern Ontario. Once our resources are gone, where do we go from here? Do

we finally wind up with four members in northwestern Ontario once everybody starts running away from here? Is that what our future's going to be? I don't know, but I'm sure that's what you guys are going to figure out.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Guinn, for making your views known.

TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

The Acting Chair: Our next and final deputation, unless Mark Weare from the Dryden and District Labour Council appeared, is the mayor of Fort Frances and his two councillors and the CAO. Would you like to come to the table and make your views known. Welcome Mayor Witherspoon, Councillor Tibbs and Mr Naturkach. Have I got that correct?

Mr Glenn Witherspoon: No, he's not here.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Councillor Cunningham. You have 20 minutes and you can use it as you wish. If you don't take up the 20, there'll be some questions for you.

Mr Witherspoon: It's true that you always save the best for last and we've squared the room here, so here we are.

Good afternoon. I'm Glenn Witherspoon, mayor of Fort Frances. Between the three of us here we represent almost 40 years in municipal politics, and we've seen the Tories, the Liberals, the NDP, and now the Tories again among us. So we're prepared for anything. With me today are Deane Cunningham, deputy mayor, and Councillor Sharon Tibbs.

For Frances is the largest municipality in the Rainy River district and, although we are duly elected representatives of Fort Frances, we come today to talk about the community of the Rainy River district and our concerns in the changes being proposed to the electoral boundaries of our ridings and the representation of the north.

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Initially, Deputy Mayor Cunningham brought to our council table for discussion the proposal of the combination of the Kenora and Rainy River ridings and we concurred unanimously that this change would not be in the best interests of the Rainy River riding or, for that matter, in the interests of the Kenora riding. We expressed our feelings to our Rainy River District Municipal Association as well as our NOMA group. We felt strongly that beyond that we must speak, as the centre of our district, to question the reality of the creation of such a riding.

Councillor Tibbs today will make our main presentation and we will definitely field any questions you might have from all sides.

Mrs Sharon Tibbs: Thank you, first of all, for the opportunity to provide a public view into Bill 81. In discussion with the mayor and deputy mayor, it became apparent that our thoughts were twofold: first, our concern regarding the change to our own riding, the Rainy River district and, second, the change in the number of MPPs in the north.

First I will address our area. Where it is true that federally we are part of the Kenora-Rainy River district riding, let it be clear that this is the way it has always been. People in this area have been accepting of the fact,

but who's to say it's correct? I don't believe that anyone thought change was possible. Only now, when we are headed to be represented with the same boundaries provincially, are people speaking out.

Our federal riding represents a land area that is the largest in Canada. It only has one counterpart of similar area in the entire of Canada, that being a riding in northern BC. This riding would represent in this province an area equal to one third of the land mass of Ontario. You are asking that one person in this province represent a third of the geographic area of this province. This may be called an amalgamation. We call it a loss.

In conversation with our current MP it has been said that it is virtually impossible to cover the massive geographic area. From our recollections, it is a comment that has been made by previous federal representatives.

The credibility of northern MPPs comes from their ability to personally identify with their constituents. While the current number of MPPs, 15, representing the north lacks numbers in a Legislative Assembly of 130 seats, these representatives make up for it in their efforts to communicate with their constituents. For many northern and northwestern Ontarians their MPP is the only face they ever see in the provincial government.

It has been suggested in this province that representation should be based on population alone. We question the merit of such a consideration. Both geographically and democratically this type of representation is not reasonable for here.

Let's combine the Kenora-Rainy River ridings with the rest of the north that is represented currently by 15 MPPs. We are now looking at two thirds of the land in this province being represented by 15 MPPs in an assembly of 130. Is this reduction a reasonable thing to be considering?

What does the northern part of this province bring to Ontario besides land? Resources. A case in point: A northern community working to amalgamate with an outlying area. The area had a mine and was contemplating developing a town site. The established community felt that they would benefit from the \$1-million tax base they could generate by amalgamating, as the mine currently relied on their infrastructure and community as a base. What was brought to light was the fact that this mine generated \$1 million a week into the provincial revenues.

The north represents resources, for example, minerals and forests, that deserve the maintaining of 15 MPPs. Millions of dollars from northern resources help offset the financial obligations of the total province. These dollars by far exceed the expenses of representatives from the north. We are not going for more. What we are asking for is to be reasonable, and we think that our current numbers are just that.

A reduction in the number of representatives in the north will dilute the ability of northern Ontarians to participate and interact with their MPPs and their provincial government. This reduction is not reasonable or democratic.

We support the government of the day in its efforts to put the financial house in order. However, we believe that the current number of northern MPPs is not impacting negatively on the financial situation and respectfully

request the government to withdraw Bill 81 as it is currently authored. You will have saved minimal dollars and will have deadened a collective voice that needs to be heard.

If I might add a personal comment, not in our written submission, but it's something as I listened to previous presentations that I thought I'd like to share with you. In the late 1970s I had an opportunity to be in Sarnia and was presented as part of a field staff on a stage in an arena, I remember it being. There were probably about 1,200 people there. It was a provincial recognition.

When I was introduced on stage the introduction went this way: "Sharon has travelled 1,200 miles to come to PRD," and I heard a room breathe because it was like: "Where in Ontario could possibly be 1,200 miles from Sarnia?" I spent the next four days answering that question and as close as I could get Ontarians to say is: "Do you know where Thunder Bay is? Do you know where Winnipeg is? I'm halfway in between." By the end of the four days I was known as the person from the other part of Ontario, and I am extremely disappointed to think that this is just a further continuation of that kind of thinking by some Ontarians.

Mr Deane Cunningham: If I can just add, we have also included a map with our presentation. I apologize. It's not the greatest map in the world. It's a photocopy. It's the best one we could come up with, but it does show you the size of the Kenora-Rainy River riding in proportion to the —

Interjection.

Mr Cunningham: I'm sure I don't have to give you a geography lesson. I think you've probably been getting one all day.

I would also just like to say in closing, and I heard it said earlier about representation by population, we in our group here feel that representation by population cannot be the only criterion for drawing electoral boundaries. Some consideration has to be given for the size of the area. Thank you. We are open for questions.

The Acting Chair: We have some questions for you. We have five minutes for each caucus starting with the government.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much for that. I appreciate your alerting us to this, but I would draw your attention to the fact that that is not in fact the map of the final shape of the riding. You have a considerable portion — this I think was the original proposal. You show this going all the way over to the Albany River north of what would have been a much smaller Algoma-James Bay riding. That has changed completely. The riding right now is a straight line that just goes slightly east of Lake Nipigon and draws a line straight north-south over the Albany River, and that's the real shape. I've got a map here and I'd be pleased to share it with you. It's a considerably smaller riding than what you show there.

You said, "Save the best for the last," and I had hoped at some point during the hearings here today we'd have someone explain to us — there's no doubt, there's probably been extraordinary service in the riding of Rainy River. Yet right now, Mr Hampton represents an infinitely smaller geographical area than Mr Miclash, and

I will give Mr Miclash his due. He has a far, far, far larger geographical area, but he's also has 60% more constituents. Mr Hampton earlier today said he was in favour of redistribution, but unfortunately neither of the other two parties has said anything other than, "What's on the table is wrong." We haven't seen anybody say it should go to 40,000 or 30,000 —

Mr Hampton: Chair, that's just not correct.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Miclash had 32,000 voters and Mr Hampton had 19,000. Mr Miclash — I would give full credit — has a far harder task representing both the geography and the number of people.

What would be a fair number that could be arrived at? I don't think anyone, certainly no one I've spoken to anywhere in this province, can defend the fact that Mr Hampton has fewer than one sixth the number of voters of Mr Palladini. He has 129,000 voters that he's responsible for. Certainly I don't think anyone is suggesting that while Rainy River might be relatively long, it's not very high north to south. I don't think, as the eighth-largest riding in the province right now, that it can claim to need fewer people than the other seven.

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What would you say would be a fair population in the rural northern ridings, given that Mr Hampton himself has said that he does agree that redistribution is a good thing every 10 years?

Mr Witherspoon: I'll speak on that first. First of all, there are 23,000 people in the Rainy River district and 52,000 in the Kenora district.

Mr Gilchrist: No, it's the voters. Sorry, registered voters in the last provincial — I've got the exact number here if you'd like to see it.

Mr Witherspoon: Very good. A fair number should never be brought into the equation when it comes to representation because it would be impossible ever to get a fair number — and you know that — throughout the province, so that, I think, is an unfair question. Right now we vote by districts and by areas, and that's the way it has to remain, because you'd be forever trying to figure out what's a fair way to vote. The people in your riding would be upset because — you talked about Mr Palladini; maybe there are 500 people more in your riding than his, I don't know. But that is definitely an unfair way of garnering a vote.

Mr Gilchrist: Forgive me; maybe I didn't phrase the question well. If Mr Miclash has the greater geography — and we've heard all day today that that's the consideration we're supposed to be balancing off against population — how can he have greater population and greater geography? Surely to goodness one's a tradeoff to the other. So if you're telling me that 32,000 are ably represented in an infinitely larger territory, how can we defend 19,000? Surely that number has to go up to something higher than Mr Miclash to offset the smaller territory.

Mr Witherspoon: I think, sir, the way it's set up it is impossible to do it, the way the boundaries or the districts are. If you want to change the boundary or the district, I'm sure people in Kenora will be upset, and vice-versa. That's the way it is. As both my colleagues say, our whole geographic area is built because of the vastness. Fort Frances is 9,000. We see our MP, Mr

Nault, quite often because he makes presentations to council and we're dealing with his office on a regular basis. But if you put our MPPs in that source, and we deal a great deal more with provincial governments than we do federally — and you know that's true because that's the next level of government — it's too big a distance for us to garner what we need. Even though our member may be sitting in the House opposite you, some day the person in Rainy River district might be sitting beside you. You don't know. So think of it on both sides.

Mr Hampton: Just a point of privilege, Chair: I take offence at something Mr Gilchrist said. When the government introduced this legislation, I was clearly on the record and other members were clearly on the record that we were not opposed to looking at a redistribution of ridings. We've said very clearly that there is an established process in this process. It is a non-partisan process. It is a process that goes back to the 1950s where people across the province are consulted and where there is actually an electoral commission put together, and you look at issues like geography, you look at issues like remoteness, you look at issues like community of interest. You don't simply put an adding machine on the table and then divide by a certain number. That's been the case throughout. No one is opposed to redistribution, but we believe there has to be a redistribution system where people are actually and honestly consulted and where things like that are looked at.

Mr Gilchrist: Chair, since he asked, I am allowed to make a point.

Mr Miclash: No, I don't think he is. On my time?

Mr Gilchrist: He asked about that commission. I think it was a fair question to ask these presenters what their views would be in just that very same context.

Mr Miclash: So why didn't you do that?

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen. Could we get on with the questions to our guests. Mr Miclash.

Mr Miclash: Well, I will direct the question to the presenters. We've talked here about the federal boundaries commission and Mr Hampton has just referred to a possible commission to take a look at what we are doing here in Ontario, not to go by what the federal government has done, where they have made allotment in other areas of the country; we've heard about the east coast, we've heard about the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, where there have been allowances. I think what we're all getting at here is that maybe this bill should be put on hold and maybe the whole concept should be referred to a provincial commission. What are your views on that?

Mr Cunningham: I've sat through the proceedings here for an hour and a half, and I certainly think that would probably be a fairer way of doing it than what I am seeing here today. I didn't know what to expect when I came up here, and I guess I'm looking at the government fighting with the opposition. I can watch that on TV any day of the week.

Mrs Tibbs: And do.

Mr Cunningham: There's got to be a more non-partisan way of deciding this issue than what I'm seeing here today.

Mr Miclash: So you would say that we would be treating you fairly if we as a committee returned to

Queen's Park and — I know we'll have Bill Murdoch's help on this — get across to the Premier that northern Ontario is not happy with this and that we would like to refer the whole issue, the whole issue that would consult with those people north of the 51st whom we haven't heard from today; we haven't heard from anyone, and I hope they will be presenting the next two days. But beyond three days of northern Ontario hearings, maybe we should be reaching out to more of the population. Is that the message you think we as a committee should be taking back?

Mr Witherspoon: I agree with that statement that there should be more input taken into consideration before something drastic is done in regard to eliminating ridings. One of the previous speakers, Lynn Beyak, who ran for the Conservative Party — she ran an excellent campaign against Howard Hampton and he squeaked past her by just a little bit — made statements that the government had in its book that they were going to reduce government and reduce costs. The way to reduce costs in government possibly is not eliminating seats. There are so many layers of bureaucracy. I've been involved with municipal politics for many, many years; we have not had a tax increase in our town for going on seven years and we've eliminated and we have cut next to nothing in services. There are much better ways of reducing costs and bureaucracy and levels of government than reducing MPPs. They're not your problem. People want representation.

Mr Miclash: I think she would have agreed with you before the election, and I indicated that to her today, that she did make comments in that vein before the election, but today we were kind of blown away by her presentation indicating a totally different view. Again, I agree with you. I was quite surprised as well.

Mr Michael Brown: One of the things that I think is interesting here is that the government believes that the federal government drew these boundaries right. Now, anybody who has followed the federal process would have some concerns about that. As you know, it started under the former Conservative government. It was then taken over by a new Liberal government. The Liberal government's original position, which had changed from the Conservative government's, was blocked in the Senate. There were a lot of very interesting things going on, to say the least. The idea that this result that has come out is perfect would not be shared by anybody who looked at the process whatever.

What we have been suggesting is that a standard electoral boundaries commission be established to redraw the riding boundaries, taking into account population, geography, communities of interest and those other things that need to be taken into account for Ontario boundaries, which have always been taken into account.

Our frustration on this side is that we do not believe the government will move from this position, no matter what's happening here today. I'm finding that a difficult position to be in, to be up here pretending that we're really listening to you when we know their mind is made up. I guess it really wasn't a question.

Mrs Tibbs: I'd like to comment on that, if I might. Therein lies the concern, and we've heard the same thing,

"You're wasting your time." Any time I get to talk to any MPPs in my province, I don't think that's a waste of time. However, we do have concern that if this indeed is what happens we are going to see our provincial offices and services throughout the Rainy River district be redirected to Kenora and into that riding because it is a larger centre. There is a concern. We have seen it happen. It would be nice to have some assurances that those things were going to be reasonable, that if 60% of the population is here and 40% is there, because 60% is here not all the offices are going to be there to represent the whole bunch. There have to be some assurances. These are the things we feel and live, and have lived for quite some time.

Mr Len Wood: To refer to the final page in your presentation, you're saying the MPPs are "not impacting negatively on the financial situation and respectfully request the government to withdraw Bill 81." Just to follow up on what Mike Brown has said, the federal redistribution system was flawed. It was started under Brian Mulroney, and then when Jean Chrétien became the Prime Minister he said: "That's no good. I'm going to kill it and we're going to redo it." We find out that as a result we end up with four more members in Ontario federally, which is contrary to what the Harris government is doing — he said he's going to make 27 less — but there are four more federally than before. It went from 99 to 103, and they just arbitrarily took one out of the middle of northeastern Ontario and gave that to southern Ontario.

It's quite obvious that the group that made the presentation feels strongly that Bill 81 should be withdrawn and there should be another process used instead of just arbitrarily ramming a bill like this through the House. We've heard comments that were made outside of this room — it was carried on CBC — that there's no use in making too many presentations, no use in travelling too much through northern Ontario, because Mike Harris and his group are not going to allow any amendments whatsoever to Bill 81; that it's as presented, and that's the way it's going to come back for third reading and it's going to be passed into law before December 12. What reaction do you think will happen in northeastern and northwestern Ontario if this is the case?

Mr Witherspoon: We've gone through the exercise of sitting down as a council with our administration people and talked about Bill 81 and we've talked at the municipal level with the whole district and got the feeling that Bill 81 — we felt we were coming here and we didn't realize it would be a "we/they" thing. We thought we'd be talking to the panel, who would take the information back. It's good to listen to it with your own ears, so you're not getting it secondhand. I agree with you there. But I think you have to come and listen. Whether you come here or whether you go to Peterborough or whether you go to Sault Ste Marie — wherever you go — you've got to go with an open mind.

We're coming here with an honest and sincere presentation of what we believe we need in the north and then you say what you need in your riding and it will all have to weigh out. But we're here sincerely speaking to you that we want representation to sit, whatever side of the

House he sits on. Our people, percentage-wise, elected them and we'd like to have them there.

Mr Len Wood: As we're just about to wrap up, no doubt there is a lot of anger and frustration on a lot of things that have happened where the north just feels they're not being listened to by Queen's Park, even though we hear that a lot of cabinet ministers might have come into Thunder Bay and might have gone into Sault Ste Marie and might have gone into some of the areas. But they haven't been into some of the other areas, because offices are closing and the population is shrinking as a result of cutbacks where other means could have been used to balance the budget deficit and debt. There's no doubt about that.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Witherspoon and councillors Tibbs and Cunningham, for coming here today and making a sincere, vigorous representation.

Mr Witherspoon: We hope you enjoy the north and that you have a safe trip home. Thank you for the time.

The Acting Chair: The same to you. I'd like to say thanks to all the members of the public for attending today.

Mr Len Wood: Mr Chair, if I could briefly, and I've talked to some people, I had a request come through for financial assistance to one of our presenters today and would hope that the subcommittee would look at it. I know the request is supposed to come through before the person makes their presentation here, but it's been considered in some cases. I would put on the record that Florence Buffington did a lot of travelling here and would look for financial assistance.

The Acting Chair: She must submit it to the clerk in writing and the subcommittee will examine it.

Mr Len Wood: I wanted to put it on the record. Thank you, Chair.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. That adjourns this session.

The committee adjourned at 1705.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

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*Mr Len	Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H.	Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Michael	Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin L) for Mr Sergio
Mr Steve	Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr Michael	Gravelle (Port Arthur L) for Mr Grandmaître
Mr Howard	Hampton (Rainy River ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr John	Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Carroll
Mr Frank	Miclash (Kenora L) for Mrs Pupatello

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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Vendredi 22 novembre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 réduisant
le nombre de députés



Chair: Jack Carroll
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Friday 22 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Vendredi 22 novembre 1996

The committee met at 0906 in the Holiday Inn, Sault Ste Marie.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Acting Chair (Mr John Hastings): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We'll start our second day of hearings on Bill 81. We have a full set of hearings. It'll probably take us right up to 5 o'clock. If there are any two presentations in a row en français, we'll take a five-minute break to help the translator, if that's agreeable.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Absolutely.

The Acting Chair: The subcommittee had recommended that, so can you tell us, Mr Wildman, whether there may be —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I've looked at the list and I don't think that there are going to be any in French. There was supposed to be one from Dubreuilville, but they have sent a letter which I'll submit to the committee, and they have actually sent it in English. They couldn't come because it's too far.

I just want to make one point, if I could. First, I'd like to welcome the committee to Sault Ste Marie. I appreciate the fact that the hearings are being held in this community and I would like to ask, since I haven't been with the committee until today, if, for the information of members of all three caucuses on the committee — we have maps of the present ridings and the proposed new boundaries. Of particular interest in this area of course is Sault Ste Marie, which is not really affected by the redrawing of the boundaries, but in particular the ridings of Algoma and Algoma-Manitoulin, and to a lesser extent Lake Nipigon and Nickel Belt. I'm sure the research done for the committee has provided you with maps and this information; otherwise we would be working from a lack of information, and I know no committee members would want to do that.

The Acting Chair: No, the committee has not provided maps. Have you got some?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): We have the new map, and I guess the old map is up here. I can't speak for the other members, but —

Mr Wildman: The problem I suspect for many members, particularly those from southern Ontario, is that you may not have ever been here. For those of you who have, most of you unfortunately have come by air, and I suspect the committee has come by air. Perhaps it would have been better if we'd required the committee to travel by van, to get some understanding of the distances.

I have the federal proposals and I've looked through them, and unfortunately the way they've divided up the province, they don't have any map of Algoma or Algoma-Manitoulin riding. I'm just wondering how on earth the committee can operate without knowing what the boundaries are now and what they will be.

Mr Gilchrist: I think we can abbreviate this, Chair. If you would like to phone back to Queen's Park and get a copy of the old map faxed up here, fine, but I think we should proceed with the groups before us here right now.

ALGOMA FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Acting Chair: All right. Mr Bonner, from the Algoma Federation of Agriculture, is our first presenter. You have 20 minutes, sir. Use your time as you wish. If it's shorter, you can probably expect some questions from all three caucuses, divided by time.

Mr Ron Bonnett: I have put together a written presentation, but I'm just going to use that as a sort of guide to follow through. For the record, my name is Ron Bonnett, I'm with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, a regional director on that. I'm also a municipal politician, a reeve of a small township about 40 miles east of here. A fellow presenter, Ryan Connolly, is unable to attend because of personal reasons.

I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to address some of the issues and concerns with regard to redistribution. I think there are a lot of issues that need to be addressed and they're not just necessarily northern issues; they're also rural issues. I know there was considerable discussion at our federation of agriculture convention this week about the whole aspect of riding redistribution and the impact that will have on rural communities.

The Fewer Politicians Act raises concerns in several areas. Sometimes people fail to realize the realities of the geography in northern Ontario. There is going to be a definite impact on the type of representation that we receive from our members. Municipalities have particular concerns: How will they communicate with the member? The rural voice: With the redistribution there is a lot less

representation for rural communities. Must we mirror federal ridings? I think sometimes we have a tendency not to stand on our own but just to copy what other people have done. And then there is the whole economics of the changes.

One of the things that I sat down and tried to do was visualize what it would be like to drive across the new riding and serve the new riding. I live pretty near the central area of the new riding, and if you were to leave my place and drive to the far eastern end, drive back, visiting an hour in each community to talk to the constituents, go to Manitoulin Island, drive to the far end of the island and back, then come up this way — we've got another island, St Joe Island; we have to go over and visit the communities there — drive up to the Sault and then drive north to Hornepayne, Manitouwadge, Chapleau, the communities, it's just unbelievable.

As you see in the written report, I worked it out. It would take about 60 hours, but that's not stopping to eat, that's not stopping to sleep. How do you serve a riding like that?

One of the problems I see with representation, especially in northern Ontario, is the fact that the member also has to spend time with their family. They are likely going to move the family to Toronto, because when they're through at the House, they're going to have a lot more time to spend with their family there than they will when they come to their riding. Once they hit the riding, they're going to have to have running shoes on to keep up, because one of the obligations of a member is to get out and talk to the people, listen to their concerns, understand what is going on. There are people who have said that staff can do this job, but I sometimes feel when you use staff as a communications link between the member and the residents, you lose that connection. I think that connection is extremely important.

It was mentioned earlier about flying into northern Ontario. That's fine when you're going into major communities, but most small communities in northern Ontario haven't even got a gas station, let alone an airport. Driving is a way of life. We've got substandard roads, we've got terrible weather usually in the wintertime, and it is extremely difficult to get around.

As I stated earlier, I'm also a municipal politician. I've been involved with municipal politics for a number of years. I think one of the key components of effective representation at the local level is the relationship that develops between a member of the provincial Parliament and those people who are representing the local communities. You do not necessarily have to agree on politics, but you have to agree on providing the best service for the community.

I think at a time when municipalities are being forced to reshape and restructure and deliver services in a different way, that communications link between municipal politicians and elected officials is more important than ever.

Rural Ontario does not fare that well in this redistribution. The figures we have at the federation of agriculture are that the rural voice goes from 26% of the total ridings down to 18%, while in the north we have lost 30% of our members. But if you look at this loss in northern Ontario

from a rural perspective, we've lost half of our rural representation. Our members are being asked to service an area that is almost impossible to represent.

There's been some talk about mirroring federal ridings, but federal ridings and federal members deal with different issues than the provincial representatives do. Provincial representatives are involved with sewer and water. They're involved with human issues, agricultural issues, forestry issues to a much greater extent than the federal members are, so there's more of a need for them to get out and see what is going on in the community.

Just because the feds have realized that they should switch their ridings around does not necessarily mean that the province has to do the same. I think it's got to be put in perspective: Federal representation in Ontario has gone up, not down. We must develop a rationale for riding redistribution which takes into account the geographical distances that must be covered in some rural ridings.

One of the main reasons being given for the change is the saving of money. The total amount saved is \$11 million. When you put this in perspective, though, is it that much? With a \$55-billion budget, when you start crossing off the zeros, it's the same thing as someone making \$55,000 a year saving \$11. That's not really a tremendous cost for effective representation.

In closing, there are several comments I would like to make.

I think you should examine closely what savings are going to be made. If a member has to use air travel, if a member has to use more staff, you may not save the money that you really think you would. If a member cannot keep contact with the local issues, sometimes things can get out of hand at the local level and it may cost more to fix problems later on than it would to identify those problems early and have them solved.

You must develop a formula for riding redistribution which factors in the distances travelled by rural members. Some ridings you can walk across in four hours; ours you can barely fly across. Voters must have access to their elected officials. If they do not have that access, we lose that connection that is so important.

The last comment may be a little bit controversial. I had a conversation at the federation of agriculture meeting with one of the sitting members, the member for Norfolk. He indicated that I could come to this hearing and make a presentation if I wanted to, but he said the government had made its mind up on what the riding redistribution was. I was offended. If this hearing is set up mainly as window dressing to justify a decision that has already been made, this is a waste of taxpayers' dollars; it's a waste of people's time. Representatives have an obligation to listen to the concerns in areas, not have their policies driven strictly by philosophy.

I asked the member if he had ever been in northern Ontario. He said no and he didn't have any concept of the distances at all. I think one of the worst things that can happen is that we have elected officials trying to make decisions when they have never been on the ground and do not understand how far it is from point A to point B.

I trust that this committee will have recommendations that will change the shape of the ridings. I'm not necess-

arily opposed to riding change, but I think you must have some thought for how a member is going to service that riding.

I'm open for questions.

The Acting Chair: Thank you. We have some questions. We have about 11 minutes, so we'll divide that equally, starting with the Liberals.

0920

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Thank you, Mr Bonnett, for coming. I think it's important, and we want to commend you for coming to represent the federation of agriculture. You've touched on a couple of points that I think are particularly important, the first being that of course northern Ontario loses a third of its representation where the rest of the province loses, on average, about 20%, so obviously our influence in the Legislature in terms of numbers of members is going to be less.

Also critically important is the diminished representation from rural Ontario as a whole and the fact that in northern Ontario the five seats we'd lose are essentially the rural northern seats. I find that to be particularly undemocratic, because I think the voice for people in those areas is going to be very, very difficult to get through.

Having represented one of the ridings that's about to be redistributed, one of the things my friends from the south don't quite understand is the layers of bureaucracy, the number of politicians we have that people can go to, are not the same as what they have in southern Ontario. There are no county governments. A lot of their structures just don't exist here, so it's the MPP they talk to because that's the politician they can have some influence with.

Do you want to comment a little bit more particularly on what's going to happen to rural northern Ontario?

Mr Bonnett: I think you've touched on a good point, Mike. Rural northern Ontario actually benefits the rest of the province: We have forestry industries, we have agricultural industry, we have mining industries. A lot of the natural resources that come out of the north are the fuel that drives the whole economy of the rest of the province. Very seldom do we have people come up here to find out what the specific concerns are of these industries, and if these industries' concerns are not addressed the rest of the province will suffer.

You mentioned the fact that there is a direct link between people, businesses, municipalities and their elected official. It's true, we do not have regional government, we do not have county government systems. It is local officials and the provincial rep. All these issues are dealt with in that manner, and that linkage is so important. If you lose that, there's not an understanding of the issues.

I sit on an advisory committee for forestry issues. We have a direct link to our MPP. The municipal associations have a direct link to the MPPs. The MPPs actually attend those meetings. That's where they get the information of what's going on in the area, and if you spread the area out even wider, they're going to lose the ability to do that. One of the things of interest is that right now there are two municipal associations in the area. There's one in

Manitoulin and there's also one that goes from about Spanish up to Wawa. To spread that out any wider, you're not going to be able to bring the municipal politicians together on a common issue to meet with their member, and that is the way we do things here. We meet with the member directly and discuss the issues on a one-to-one basis with them. We don't have that level of bureaucracy.

Mr Michael Brown: So obviously there are going to be fewer opportunities to meet the member, no matter how hard the member works. At the same time, the member has to work harder at Queen's Park because there are fewer colleagues who may be hearing the same thing in their own constituency. So the people who need representation are going to lose on both ends. They're going to lose in terms of numbers in the House and they're going to lose in terms of access to the person they deal with.

Mr Bonnett: I agree completely. The other thing that has to be addressed when you're covering a geography that goes from Quebec City to Windsor is that you have a lot of diversity: You have communities that are based solely on mining, you have communities that are based solely on agriculture, you have communities that are manufacturing-based, you have tourism industries. So, you're dealing with more complexity than you would in a small riding in southern Ontario where it is more homogeneous.

Mr Wildman: Thanks, Ron, for coming, and I'm sorry to hear that Ryan couldn't make it. I'd like to concentrate on the logistics here. I see in your written presentation, and you mentioned it in your verbal presentation, some of the distances involved. As Mr Brown has dealt with the loss of representation I won't deal with that. I'd just like to deal with some of the logistics.

As we don't have the maps here, I've tried to work out the distances. If it you start in Manitouwadge, which is currently in Lake Nipigon riding —

Mr Michael Brown: In the district of Thunder Bay.

Mr Wildman: Yes, that's right. It's much closer to Thunder Bay than it is to where we are here. And Thunder Bay, by the way, is the same distance from Sault Ste Marie as is Toronto.

If you start in Manitouwadge and just drive, my calculations — and they may not be exact but I think they're close — are that if you drive to Nairn Centre and Espanola, which is near Sudbury, you've driven approximately 600 kilometres. That doesn't count Killarney, which is another 100 kilometres, and it doesn't count St Joseph Island and it doesn't count Chapleau, which is about another 150 kilometres northwest of Sudbury. So not counting any of those, just going along Highway 17, just driving, straight time, it would take you somewhere between eight and nine hours.

Mr Michael Brown: But you have to get to the west of Manitoulin.

Mr Wildman: That's true. I was going to get to Manitoulin in a moment. How long is Manitoulin from one end to the other?

Mr Michael Brown: About 110 miles, 160 kilometres.

Mr Wildman: One hundred and sixty kilometres.
Interjection.

Mr Wildman: If you would like to tell me that you don't think that I'm being accurate, then give me the accurate figures.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I can't see it from here.

Mr Wildman: That's your fault, not mine.

Mr Chair, I didn't think I was going to have this kind of attitude expressed in a committee that is supposed to be looking at how we properly represent a very large geographic area, but I suspect that's probably the attitude this committee is going to be presented with. It's unfortunate.

Mr Michael Brown: You should have been here yesterday.

Mr Wildman: Well, maybe there's no point in asking this question.

The Acting Chair: You've got a minute.

Mr Wildman: The point I was making is that it would take a full day's drive just to drive it, without stopping to see anybody, without stopping. It would take approximately the same length of time as it would to drive from Sault Ste Marie to Toronto — a little more, actually; not much more.

Do you think that it's reasonable to have that kind of geographic area, keeping in mind that we are, after all, in a democracy that believes in representation by population? The argument will be made — there are two arguments that I want you to answer, if you could.

The first one is that the geographic area shouldn't be really considered because what we're really trying to do is make sure all the constituencies have similar populations so that everybody's vote is worth the same — representation by population — so if you have to have enormous ridings like this in northern Ontario to do that, fine. That's the first issue.

The other issue is that the feds have done this, so the federal member — the current federal member for this riding is Brent St Denis, and I suspect he will run in the new riding — will have to represent that, and if he can represent it, what's the problem? So should the provincial member. How do you deal with those two arguments?

Mr Bonnett: On the first one, on the geography and the representation — actually, I'm here representing the federation of agriculture. It costs them thousands of dollars to have me sit as a director of their organization because I have to fly to meetings, I have to drive tremendous distances. That's a cost of having good representation, because the issues in the north — just because the distances are great doesn't mean the concerns are any less. That's a cost of democracy. Representation costs. You can't have one thing fit everything.

You mentioned some of the distances. You didn't mention that it was an hour to drive from Highway 17 into Hornepayne. You didn't mention that it would be about three hours to drive from Highway 17 up to Chapleau. That's one way. You didn't mention that it's half an hour to drive into the community of Dubreuilville. You see, these are all offshoots. You get over to Manitoulin Island, it's the same way. You get into St Joe Island, it's the same way.

I think there's a complete lack of understanding about the distances involved. When people look at the northern

Ontario map, they don't realize that maps are drawn on a different scale. If northern Ontario was drawn to the same scale as southern Ontario, you'd need that wall to put the map on. They shrink northern Ontario's scale.

Geography must be one of the determining factors in representation, because it isn't just the number of people, it's the access, and you deny access when you spread the geography too great.

0930

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): Thank you very much for your presentation. You have a comparison here of a person who makes \$55,000 a year and would cut their spending by \$11, but I really think a more accurate comparison is a person who has a take-home pay of \$55,000 a year but spends \$63,000 and has done that continually year after year after year. What that person would have to do is, first of all, stop the increase in spending and then look at every area they spend in and reduce it.

Politics is about choices, as you well know. I would like to ask your view: If you had another \$2 million or \$3 million — the savings is \$11 million — in the north to spend, wouldn't you rather spend it on schools that are needed, or on kidney dialysis service in the communities, or magnetic resonance imaging, or home care for people who really need it?

Mr Wildman: Or on agriculture.

Mr Bonnett: Yes, agriculture would be a better one.

Mr Young: Well, there's a lot more than agriculture in this.

Mr Bonnett: There are almost two parts to your question. The first part was the analogy about the \$55,000 and spending \$63,000. That is correct. I ran a business for years; I had a dairy farm. I did not cut the feed I was feeding to the cattle because that would cut my milk production and eventually it would cut my profits. You have to be careful where you cut. You can end up cutting where it's going to cost you more in the long run.

The other part of your question was about spending on hospitals, spending on schools, spending —

Mr Young: Not hospitals — we're trying to close empty hospital beds — but in front-line health care: kidney dialysis, magnetic resonance imaging. That's front-line health care. Get the money right to people who need it, or to children in the schools.

Mr Bonnett: It's a noble objective, but the thing is that to be able to do that, you have to understand what the concerns and the issues are in each individual area. How are you going to do that if you're relying on a bureaucracy in Toronto to make decisions based in the rural communities? You have to have a member out there who is talking to the people who are getting that service, who's talking to the people who are living in the area, finding out if they have some local solutions for the problems rather than trying to put this one size fits all on everything.

I think it's not an either/or. It's that if you have good representation, you're going to get the solutions to those other problems you're talking about.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Ron, how big an area do you represent as regional director?

Mr Bonnett: As regional director, I represent the agricultural community from Blind River through to the Sault, so it would be about 80 miles.

Mr Stewart: Every time you want information on behalf of various things in the government, are you always meeting with the MPP or do you get a bit involved with the staff and so on and so forth?

Mr Bonnett: I'm involved with the staff a certain amount, but quite often we are involved with the MPP.

Mr Stewart: Mind you, that's partly because you are, what, 40 miles away from the main centre sort of thing?

Mr Bonnett: That's right. Bud is our MPP, and I should put in perspective that we are not on the same side of the political fence. I should make that perfectly clear to start with.

Mr Stewart: There's lots of us aren't.

Mr Bonnett: The key thing is that the member comes to our community. Every time he comes to the community, he's questioned, he's giving advice, he's asking for advice. It's that connection and communication that's important.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Bonnett. My apologies. I used an "r" at the end of your name and called you Bonner, because I'm misreading it.

Mr Bonnett: That's okay. I've been called a lot worse.

The Acting Chair: A CBC Radio announcer of many years had that name, and he was in agriculture. Thank you for coming today and making your views known.

GAYLE BROAD

The Acting Chair: Ms Gayle Broad is next. Ms Broad, you have 20 minutes to make your views known and use the time however you wish. If it's shorter, we'll have some questions for you, with the time divided between all three caucuses. Proceed.

Ms Gayle Broad: I was asked to speak today on behalf of a number of organizations and I requested instead that I be allowed to speak on my own behalf because I wanted to feel free to make comments from a number of different perspectives, so I hope you will bear with me, as I speak from a number of different roles I have played in my life. One of those roles was as a federal candidate in the last federal election, and I would like to make note of the fact that Mr Bonnett and I also come from different political spectrums. I think that's important to note because I want this committee to be aware that people who are here are speaking from different political perspectives, and although we may be speaking with the same perspective on this issue we do come from different political parties, and I think that's an important issue for the committee to be aware of.

I also speak as a small business person. I own a small tourist resort located about 50 miles northeast of Sault Ste Marie. I also speak as a person who, in my other work-life, has been responsible for providing services to people in the district of Algoma. I want to speak to that, because the district of Algoma itself would only form part of the new proposed boundaries, and yet we as an organization have continuously struggled from the day we opened in 1984 to try to adequately serve the district of Algoma and we still feel we are unable to do so, certainly in large part because of the distances that involves.

I have lived all of my life in northern Ontario and grew up northeast of Sault Ste Marie, approximately 45 to 50 miles away, which over the years has gradually decreased in distance from the Sault because you measure it in time travelled. As I was growing up, it usually took us an hour and a half to get to the Sault. Now we're down to about an hour. We travel the road much more quickly, but unfortunately the road itself has not improved greatly, and there are a number of services that I think are normally available throughout the rest of the province that are not available in rural and northern Ontario, which makes it much more difficult to provide service.

I would like to appeal to all of you in your lives as MPPs to think about what your life currently consists of, for a moment or two. As a person who has been involved in politics for a number of years and who chose to run as a candidate, I know the kinds of lives you have. They're not easy lives. You spend your life travelling between Toronto and your own constituency. When you are home on Fridays you usually have very busy constituency office days. You spend most of your evenings and weekends attending events in your communities. The purpose of doing that is not only that you become re-elected next time round but it's also to hear and talk to the people whom you represent. In order to give them adequate representation, you take a great deal of time from your own personal life to invest in your community and in your constituency.

Bud Wildman has been an example of that. Very few of us can keep up the 20-hour days that Bud Wildman does as he travels around the riding representing his constituents. Yet despite that, and despite the kind of hours that I am sure each of you puts in, there will still be many people in your own constituency who feel they have not received adequate representation, that you weren't able to attend the event they planned. I know that in scheduling yourselves, in planning your schedules for your weekends and for your Fridays, you often have to make very difficult decisions about which event are you going to attend. Which meeting are you going to go to? Where is it most important for you to be? Is it most important for you to be at that hospital board meeting or is it more important for you to attend a meeting with a number of business leaders? Where do you take the time? How do you allocate it? It's a very difficult piece of each MPP's job. In a riding that stretches throughout a district the size of Algoma, and then adds on to it a piece of Thunder Bay district and a piece of Sudbury district, it is almost impossible to make those kinds of decisions and to schedule that kind of time.

0940

In the six weeks of the campaign I was in, I spent over \$4,000 on travel. That was only by car. I did not travel in luxury; I travelled in a car that got good gas mileage. We travelled very economically, yet it cost us \$4,000 to criss-cross the riding a few times, a very few times, during the course of the campaign. Again, that is at least a third less than the riding boundaries being proposed here.

There are three reasons that I have heard given for the change in riding boundaries. The first is to save money. Mr Bonnett raised a number of issues about saving

money. I also want to make the point that in northern and rural communities, people often still do not have access to telephones. They certainly do not have access to fax machines. If you want to question that fact about telephones, I can probably identify for you, if you give me a little time, the number of days last year that my telephone service was out at my business, and those are many days, because we do not have good telephone service. Many communities have service only by radio telephone. I've been to two communities in the last month which do only have service by radio phone, just to let you know that this is not an extremely unusual situation. People certainly don't have access to good computer lines, good service sufficient to run modems and so on. We don't have access to that. Our representation has to come from face-to-face attendance in the community and it has to come from someone who understands the issues that the people are dealing with in those communities.

Although I've lived here all my life, there were communities within the district of Algoma that I did not visit until I decided to run as a federal candidate. That is pretty common, and I'm a person who has worked for an organization that has tried to provide service throughout the district of Algoma. But there are many communities that are so isolated, that are so far off of Highway 17, that you just don't get there unless you really need to go. You cannot possibly understand the issues in those communities if you don't at least visit them.

Mr Wildman outlined the distances that are involved. I can assure you that those distances are not exaggerated in any way. Those are the distances. A member in this proposed new riding — I would challenge anybody to be able to physically go to every community even once in a year. If you look at weather conditions throughout the winter months, you're just not going to get to every community in a year. I think it's appalling that we should have communities of 200 or 300 or 400 people who do not have one visit from their member during the course of a year.

The second reason given was to more fairly represent on the basis of population. I have worked in campaigns both within the boundary limits of Sault Ste Marie and within the district of Algoma. I can assure you, and I think Mr Martin would agree with me, that it is much easier to provide service — although I'm not denigrating the challenge it is for members to provide good service to their constituencies within a city confined by a city limit and a boundary. It is a challenge, and I don't doubt that.

Certainly within the multicultural communities of southern Ontario, I recognize that it is a real challenge to provide good representation to those diverse elements. However, when you know you can go to the Croatian hall on Wellington Street and you can go to Marconi Hall on Cathcart Street and you can visit those different elements within your community within a 15- or 20-minute drive, that is entirely different from trying to represent a community like Dubreuilville, which is four and a half, five hours north of Sault Ste Marie. It's just a completely different kind of time commitment and investment of energy to talk about going to see the Finnish club or the

Croatian community or whatever within the confines of a city.

The third reason that I've heard is that the federal government has done this, so why can't the province? First of all, I don't know why anyone would choose to follow a bad example, but an example has been set here. I would agree with Mr Bonnett: There are very different issues between the federal government and the provincial government. People, and I certainly am familiar with this through my experience as a candidate, do not make the connections to federal government actions the way they make the connections to health, education, the social services, the kinds of issues that affect them every day of their lives. I don't believe the federal government's decision was a good one and I certainly don't think this decision would be a good one.

The final comment I want to make is that you asked us about choices: Do I think it's more important to have MRI or home care services than to have representation? There are two things I think we need to think about in that. First of all, I completely reject your proposition that we have to make those kinds of choices. Other choices that this government is making right now have to do with giving a tremendous amount of money in tax breaks to people. That's a choice your government has made. I disagree with that choice and I think it would be much more important to keep this small piece of the budget to provide good representation. If we're going to make a choice, that's the choice I would make: no tax break and keep the representation.

Mr Young: Does that mean you —

Ms Broad: I'm not answering questions yet.

Finally, I think that people who propose to be politicians, who propose to represent people, have an obligation to represent everybody in the province. I really resent the fact that there appears to be very little concern about what it is like to live in northern Ontario, what the issues are here, and the feeling that we don't deserve the kind of representation that, if we chose to relocate in southern Ontario, we would be able to obtain. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Broad. We have four minutes, divided at one minute and a bit per party, starting with Mr Wildman and Mr Martin.

Mr Wildman: I'll just ask one question, then my colleague. Thank you for your presentation. The question that was raised that you've alluded to and that Ron Bonnett answered was whether or not you could perhaps get MRI or home care services for a community if you didn't have proper representation from that community.

I wonder how you deal with the argument about rep by pop, which is a very important argument in a democracy. You said you've been involved in campaigns both in the Sault and in Algoma district, where in fact right now there is an inequity. There are about twice as many voters in Sault Ste Marie as there are in Algoma district currently, so one vote in Algoma riding is worth two in Sault Ste Marie. How do you deal with that argument?

0950

Ms Broad: I think you will find that most of the people living within the district of Algoma feel that Sault Ste Marie gets everything and that people in Sault Ste Marie would feel —

Mr Wildman: Yes, Tony is a very good rep.

Ms Broad: A case in point right now is the hospital situation in St Joe Island and Thessalon, where those hospitals are closing. There's been a tremendous outcry in the community that their services are being shut down, and yet the hospital is being maintained in Sault Ste Marie. I think that people are feeling very much that Sault Ste Marie's voice is being heard well and above their voice.

It is much harder to organize in communities that are spread far apart, where you have 100 people here, 200 there, 150, or, like where I grew up, where you have a community of 25 people here, 15 over there, 30 there and half an hour's drive between those two communities.

Mr Tascona: Thank you for your presentation. I come from the riding of Simcoe Centre, which is made up of Barrie down to Bradford. It's not as large as the changes that are being looked at in the north here in terms of geography, obviously, but certainly it's a very large population. It's the fifth-largest in the province. I can share with you, being a member, being on council and moving to this, that certainly the volume has been the biggest change in terms of dealing with the population. It really isn't that easy to say, in dealing with population and land mass, that you can equate the two because the volume becomes so great. You can't go to a hall and meet all your constituents because each constituent has an individual problem. That's why they contact you and you have to deal with that. Land mass doesn't become the issue. For myself it becomes basically trying to keep up with the volume.

One thing I have heard in terms of the difference between a federal and provincial member is that certainly the issues differ. But one thing in terms of input that the provincial members have is a mechanism already in place where people can get input on provincial issues, such as school boards, hospital boards, municipalities and district health councils, which is something the federal members don't have.

I'd just like to say to you, on that basis, do you not think that if there are fewer politicians in the provincial sphere, because we still will have the infrastructure there, there is a chance for better representation in terms of getting things on government issues for their members, rather than the current structure in terms of the greater number of members there is right now?

Ms Broad: Does that mean you're making a commitment on behalf of the government to maintain school boards and district health councils?

Mr Tascona: That wasn't the question. The basic statement I said to you was, do you not think that fewer politicians can give greater representation in getting the basic issues solved for their members when they have fewer other politicians to compete with? That's my question.

Ms Broad: No, I don't. I served on the district health council for a number of years and found that our information went directly to the ministry. Although the minister was supposed to be looking at the information we provided, and I am sure the minister was looking at it, we did not meet on a regular basis with the Minister of Health. We sent that information in, but there were tremendous gaps in communication. I think those kinds

of mechanisms provide more opportunity for the communities to get the information in.

I would like to point out to you the difficulty in servicing as a member of the district health council. We had tremendous difficulty in really providing proper representation for the entire district. It was a real struggle, and we again wound up being overloaded on the Sault Ste Marie's side, as opposed to the district side, because it was such a difficult thing to do.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for coming, Gayle. I first am struck by someone who has been a candidate for a major political party in the federal riding who I know is well respected by the people of Algoma for putting your name forward and performing a good job for the NDP in that election.

I am puzzled by what I hear. The theory being advanced by the government is that politicians are a problem, that politicians don't listen to the folks, and if we just have a bigger bureaucracy and fewer people to watch that bureaucracy everything will be a lot better.

That is exactly the opposite of my feeling, that if they wanted to cut MPPs they would be far better to cut our staffs in half and double the number of members. Politicians, in my view, should be closer to the people, not insulated from them. That's what I hear being suggested across this room.

The thing that really bothers me is that we're talking about an area of the province that has a higher-than-average GDP than the rest of the province. This is a wealthy area with lots of resources but our people are spread out. We would be the fifth- or sixth-largest province by gross domestic product if we were a province. If we were in Manitoba with a similar population we would have 50 people representing the same area. If we were in any other province, including Quebec — they have at least 50% more provincial members than we have here in Ontario.

What I am finding absolutely puzzling is the government's notion that somehow Ontario is smarter than everybody else and that our concerns aren't the same as everybody else's. I wonder, because of your having some political experience in chasing around a huge riding, what your views might be on those comments.

Ms Broad: I think it's really popular to bash politicians. I for one still view, and I think many people in northern Ontario view, politicians as leaders within their community. That is part of the reason there is such demand for people to meet with the politician, the person they have voted for and elected, because they view that person as the leader in the community. They expect that person to take their issues forward, to be a voice for them.

People across the north — I think you will find this everywhere you go as you listen to this, although you are only going to meet here and in Timmins, that people will look to you to speak to their issues, to raise their concerns. There is a tremendously strong anti-Toronto sentiment across northern Ontario because we do not feel well represented. As it is, we don't think we get enough of our voices heard in Queen's Park.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Broad, for coming in today and presenting your views to the committee.

Is Mr Robert Weir here? No.

1000

DAN MacLELLAN

The Acting Chair: We'll go to the next person on the list, Mr Dan MacLellan. Please proceed.

Mr Dan MacLellan: Thank you very much. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dan MacLellan. I'm from the fine district of Algoma. I'm here representing no one but myself. My wife and I operate a small business in a community east of here called Bruce Mines. We employ people in the numbers of maybe six to 10 most of the year. It's my first experience doing something like this. Bear with me if I'm nervous.

It is a pleasure for me to appear here this morning because recently I've been reading with much interest about how the Liberals and the NDP were so concerned about the impacts of Bill 81 that they worked diligently to force the government to hold province-wide committee hearings. To the opposition members present I say you deserve credit for once again wasting our time and our tax dollars. Prior to the last election Mike Harris promised he would reduce the number of politicians at Queen's Park. He didn't just mention his intention during the campaign speech; he spelled it out in the Common Sense Revolution, a document I'm sure you're all very familiar with.

The simple truth is that we as a society are over-governed. There are too many politicians. Mike Harris understood that, and although he knew it would be a tough decision, he promised to reduce the number of politicians at Queen's Park.

Over the last 10 years people became weary of politicians who made promises. Promises had become empty rhetoric and made the crowds cheer at each campaign stop, but those promises were left behind in the halls and auditoriums like the trampled signs and buttons that littered the floors. Now, at Queen's Park, a promise made is a promise kept. The Liberals and the NDP have so much difficulty grasping this simple concept that they asked the government to send out a committee of MPPs across the province to seek public input. I find it astonishing that the opposition members are declaring victory for spending a great deal of time and my tax money to travel across the province to ask me if I think Mike Harris should keep a promise he was elected on.

It saddens me to think that we live in a society where politicians who keep their promises are put under such scrutiny. Am I to believe that the members of the provincial Parliament sitting at this table have nothing better to do with their time? If that is the case, I don't think Bill 81 goes far enough.

Over the years the number of politicians, administrators, civil servants and officials grew and grew without a noticeable improvement in service. The answer to yesterday's problems was to launch new programs and build more buildings and hire more staff and spend more money. Building up a big bureaucracy and spending lots of money are not solutions to the problems. In fact, they're at the root of them. What taxpayers got for their money was a debt of almost \$100 billion and a bureaucracy that was big and far from user-friendly.

Since last June the Mike Harris government has taken the steps he promised he would take to restore fiscal

responsibility and reduce the size of the bureaucracy. Each step began almost the instant the government took office. At that time each step was like taking a step up the down escalator. But that escalator is starting to move in the right direction, with rising employment and rising consumer confidence.

Part of that process is to reduce the number of elected members at Queen's Park from 130 to 103, using the exact same riding boundaries the federal government will use in the next national election. This move will save money by eliminating 27 politicians, their expenses and their staff. Electoral lists out there could be shared with the federal government and provincial government, saving more money. The confusion surrounding the overlap of provincial and federal riding boundaries will be eliminated.

Opposition members in northern Ontario say there's no way they could effectively represent the new ridings, because they are too big. If a salesman were offered a bigger territory, he or she would jump at the opportunity to meet more people, travel greater distances and increase sales. If that same salesperson were offered a bigger territory and explained to his boss that he lacked the ability to do the job and suggested that more staff should be hired, how long do you think the salesperson would last in that territory?

Do opposition members believe that the federal MPs possess supernatural powers that allow them to represent their ridings? Opposition members will argue that they are closer to the people than their federal counterparts; therefore the public would be better served by not reducing the number of MPPs. It is remarkable that the Liberal and NDP members argue that they are closer to the people, when both have been voted into and voted out of Queen's Park in the last 10 years. This seems like a good indication that the people they were supposed to be close to were not impressed by the way their interests were being represented.

Opposition members say the Harris government is hijacking democracy. We've heard it said that the people of northern Ontario will be underrepresented at Queen's Park. This argument is shortsighted, self-serving and offensive to those of us who believe that democracy means more than placing an X on a ballot. What the opposition members are saying is that once a constituent has cast their ballot, they should sit back and not interfere, for their interests can only be served by the elected member.

John F. Kennedy once said that in a democracy every citizen, regardless of his or her interest in politics, holds office. Every one of us is in a position of responsibility, and in the final analysis the kind of government we get depends on how we fulfil these responsibilities. We, the people, are the bosses, and we get the kind of political leadership, be it good or bad, that we demand and deserve. We, the taxpayers, are the bosses, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our ideas, our concerns and our interests are represented in the political forum. It's not enough to simply cast a ballot and hope for the best. Sitting back and complaining is easy, and sometimes makes us feel better, but it doesn't solve the problem.

Opposition members are quick to criticize any new initiative from the government, yet offer no feasible

alternatives. In the Harris government, I see a government that is not afraid to lead by example and make decisions for the public good that affect its own members. Gold-plated pensions, tax-free allowances and smaller cabinets are just a few examples of how this government is not afraid to make the decisions that are tough but necessary.

In some of the ways the opposition members are acting, you would think the provincial government drafted these new boundaries in a back room at Queen's Park. This is not the case. The province did not set the new boundaries. The federal Liberals struck a non-partisan commission and held 17 public hearings in 10 cities and received more than 300 presentations. The Liberal government in Ottawa set the boundaries. I'm sure Mr Chrétien didn't set the boundaries with the political fortunes of Mike Harris in mind.

I would like to dispel a few other rumours about the representation in northern Ontario:

(1) The north will be underrepresented. This is not true. Representation is based on population, but the unique characteristics of northern Ontario are taken into consideration, leaving northern ridings with smaller population bases.

(2) Some of the ridings in northern Ontario will be so large that MPPs will not be able to serve them. False. Both the NDP and the Liberals have proven track records of favouring more government and more bureaucracy, higher taxes, more debt and deficit. The federal MPs, most of whom are Liberals, didn't ask for smaller ridings because they couldn't handle the workload. If opposition members can't do the job, then I say step aside and let someone else take over.

It's also interesting to note that in Newfoundland the Liberal Party made a commitment in its last budget to reduce the number of MLAs.

Changing the riding boundaries is nothing new. We're not watching the invention of the wheel, we're watching its improvement. Technological advancements allowed difficult things to be done differently. More effective and efficient government will be the result.

Opposition members seem to believe that change of any kind is bad. The Ontario I grew up in was on a slippery slope. The services that I depended on were in danger of elimination. The government has not been afraid to take steps that are necessary to bring Ontario the beautiful back from the brink. Effective, efficient government is a part of a plan that was put forth during the last election. Sending more politicians to Queen's Park is not going to solve any problems; it'll only make them worse. If I were to ask them how to solve the problems facing our legal system, I suppose they would tell me to hire more lawyers.

In closing, I'd like to point out that what we're doing here today is analysing a promise that was made by Mike Harris during the last election, and that promise is being kept. Sheila Copps found out what happens when you break a promise. Not only am I still paying the GST, but my tax dollars paid for her by-election. Last June, Mike Harris took a shovel to the trail of broken promises that led to Queen's Park. Mike Harris believes that a promise made is a promise kept. It is unfortunate that we're wasting time and money debating whether he should keep

the promises that he was elected on. I've always believed that a job worth doing is a job worth doing well. Members and future politicians who aren't up to the task should step aside, because I guarantee you there are plenty of good people out there who are willing to do the job and willing to do it well.

I thank you for your time.

1010

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr MacLellan. We have eight minutes, so we'll start with the government side this time.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr MacLellan. I appreciate your appearing before us here today. Needless to say, I agree with all of your submissions. I guess I'd ask you a question as someone who lives very close to the Sault and not all that far from Sudbury. You mentioned earlier that the federal non-partisan boundaries commission held hearings. I'm looking at a copy of their report here. Interestingly enough, and we had the same experience up in the northwest yesterday, when you go through their report, you see that almost every single request that was made to them to change their original draft boundaries was acceded to. Certainly that was the case in the riding of Algoma. In fact — I'll abbreviate it here — based on community of interest and historical patterns, strong objections to their original suggestion removed Manitoulin Island, Espanola and George Island. The town of Massey was moved in, an area near Sudbury was moved out, and on and on through the list.

I guess my question to you is, do you think it realistic that someone would appear — we heard yesterday from the other side that they would like to take even more tax dollars and set up a provincial boundaries commission. Do you think it logical that someone would come forward and say a different thing at the federal commission than they would at the provincial one, or would their submissions be exactly the same? If you live near Sudbury and you believe that's where your focus of representation should be, you'd say that to both the federal and provincial boundaries commissions, wouldn't you?

Mr MacLellan: I would say so. If I grasped your question correctly — are you asking me if there should be two different-sized ridings, one provincially and one federally, under the same umbrella group?

Mr Gilchrist: No. The suggestion they raised is that the reason that nobody came to talk to the federal commission, or no additional people over the 300 you mentioned, was that somehow magically the MP can be reached in a way that you can't reach your MPP. So if it's long distance in the certain shape of the federal riding, all of a sudden that makes a difference when it comes to phoning your MPP, or some other magic. They couldn't come up with a single specific, but somehow the issue that MPs will be able to do the tasks in the ridings shaped as they are — don't forget, they only had 11 to start out with and they're just moving to 10 — but somehow MPPs won't be able to do that. I just don't understand that premise and I'm wondering if you think it would be a useful expenditure to set up a provincial boundaries commission at taxpayers' expense to go around and talk to the same people and ask them if they have exactly the same concerns that they have about their MP.

Mr MacLellan: I think it's absolutely a total waste of money, as is apparent here today. This is not being set up by us as a province; this is being set up by the federal government. They have looked at that. I think clearly that the people who represent this riding federally do just as good a job, although they're not members of the Progressive Conservative Party. They are members of the Liberal Party and the NDP, but they do a fair job at what they do, and they do it very well. I can't see that changing at all.

Mr Sergio: Mr MacLellan, thanks for coming down to make a presentation to our committee. I'll try and get a couple of quick questions. The first one: If you believe, as I believe, that this is a fait accompli, I believe that the government has already decided to go ahead and cut the number of representatives, do you believe then that us being here is a waste of time, a waste of taxpayers' money?

Mr MacLellan: I believe that. I believe it's a waste of taxpayers' money, yes.

Mr Sergio: If you know that the government is going to do that, why are we here? To serve the democratic process or to waste taxpayers' money?

Mr MacLellan: Because of the fact that you argued to get out here, I'm sure you feel in your heart that you are representing the process. But I also believe that it is a total waste of taxpayers' money. This has not been designed by the province of Ontario. This was designed by the federal government. The Liberals in Ottawa are doing this.

Mr Sergio: Sir, they didn't. But my second question is not on that. They did not do that. There was a commission and they gave seven months for appeals, for objections, for amendments. We are trying to do this in a month.

My second question is this: Do you agree that the budget of Mr Mike Harris's office tripled in one year?

Mr MacLellan: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the first part of your question.

Mr Sergio: The Premier's office budget tripled in the last — quadrupled.

Mr MacLellan: I'm not sure I know that —

Mr Gilchrist: You went from a triple to a quadruple.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, we're getting the same interference from the same member and I object to that.

My question to Mr MacLellan is this: Do you agree with a Premier who triples his budget within a year when he cuts everything else?

Mr MacLellan: I don't know that to be true. I'm assuming — you're telling me that at this meeting this morning — that it's true.

Mr Sergio: I'm telling you that. Do you believe that's correct?

Mr MacLellan: I have no reason to disbelieve you but I have no knowledge of the fact that it has tripled.

Mr Sergio: If that is the case, do you agree with that?

Mr MacLellan: I don't have the documentation in front of me to agree or disagree. But if I were to have that documentation and what you say is true, then I'd have to agree with you. If what you say is untrue, then I'd have to look at it from another perspective.

Mr Wildman: I want to thank you for your even-handed and non-partisan presentation.

Mr MacLellan: Very much like your own, Bud.

Mr Wildman: I must say, though, a couple of things. First, you start out by saying that democracy is not just counting a ballot and then sitting back by the citizens. I agree completely. But then you also seem angry or nonplussed about the fact that we came out to listen to you, to give you an opportunity not to sit back and to make your presentation to the Legislature. Surely if you believe that democracy involves this kind of action, you should appreciate the opportunity you've been given, rather than saying it's a waste of time and money.

Mr MacLellan: I also have a pen and a pencil and a typewriter. I could write my MPP and let him know how I feel. I didn't do that because this opportunity came up. But if there was a problem, I could phone somebody in my MPP's office or in my MP's office and make the same submission as an individual that I've done here this morning. It obviously is costing a lot of money to have this done today.

Mr Wildman: Sometimes people actually think democracy costs money. You mentioned that Newfoundland is cutting the number of seats. That's true. Newfoundland has approximately half the population of northern Ontario. Is it your knowledge that they will have half the number of constituencies in Newfoundland that we will have after this redistribution?

Mr MacLellan: I don't think he said that in his statement. I don't know what the numbers were. They have looked at reducing the numbers. I think possibly Mr Brown might know because they're his cousins out there.

Mr Wildman: If you work it on the same basis as Mr Harris, that you should have the same number of ridings provincially as federally, in the federal House of Commons there are seven people from Newfoundland, so that would mean the Legislature in Newfoundland would have seven members. Do you think that really makes sense?

Mr MacLellan: I'm not sure what their legislation is, what the laws of the land are out there in Newfoundland.

Mr Wildman: You're the one who raised it, not me.

Mr MacLellan: The point's made that they are reducing the number of MPs — MLAs I think they're called out there. MLAs are in Newfoundland.

Mr Wildman: MHAs, actually, in Newfoundland; members of the House of Assembly.

Mr MacLellan: Yes, MHAs out there in Newfoundland and they are reducing. I'm sure the Liberal people here will be able to tell you why they're doing that.

Mr Wildman: It's just that I was comparing it with Mr Harris. He says you should have the same number and that would mean, since there are seven MPs in Newfoundland, there should only be seven in their Legislature.

The other point you make is a very valid one, about the number of bureaucrats. Do you think it is easier to influence bureaucracy in Toronto — deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and so on, all of the civil servants — or is it easier to influence elected members to get your views across and to persuade Queen's Park to be receptive to the needs of an area or a population? Do you think it's better to have elected members carrying out your wishes or is it better to leave it to a bureaucracy that is not elected?

Mr MacLellan: Are you asking me for my personal opinion on this?

Mr Wildman: Yes. As a representative of the Conservative Party, you can give it that way; either way.

Mr MacLellan: My experience has been recently, in the last eight years, that any time I had any dealings with people at Queen's Park on any particular issue, I found it was easier for me to deal through people at Queen's Park that I knew rather than go through my MPP. As a matter of fact, I don't think you've ever heard from me.

Mr Wildman: Then how can you say it was easier to deal with them than with me if you've never contacted me?

Mr MacLellan: Because I think we have a different philosophy and a different political view.

Mr Wildman: I think any member here would agree with me that between elections, each one of us, Conservative, Liberal and New Democrat, tries diligently to represent the wishes and needs of all of our constituents, whatever their political stripe.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr MacLellan, for coming in today and submitting your views to us.

1020

FRANK KLEIN

The Acting Chair: We're going to change the lineup a little bit. Mr Callegari, the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Sault Ste Marie unit, sent in a submission but he is unable to speak. He lost his voice. So we're going to ask Mr Frank Klein, who was scheduled for 1:40 pm, to step into the batter's box. Mr Klein, would you like to come up and present your views to us at this time. Please proceed.

Mr Frank Klein: Thank you very much. Better not go by the script because the script says "Good afternoon." I was supposed to be on at 1:40. Good morning. My name is Frank Klein. I am a retired Sault Ste Marie city police staff sergeant. I have been retired for almost five years. I live with my wife in Bruce Mines, which is situated on Highway 17, 40 miles east of Sault Ste Marie. For the past five years, I have been a trustee with Central Algoma Board of Education and I am at present the board's vice-chairman.

Before preparing the statement that I am about to make, I interviewed many citizens in the area in which I reside. Among them were a doctor, several nurses, two school principals, four school teachers, farmers, housewives and fellow retirees. I even spoke to people who voted for Mr Wildman in the last election.

Mr Wildman: There were a few of them.

Mr Klein: What is being proposed is that we eliminate 27 MPPs, that our provincial electoral area be identical to the federal electoral areas. Is this asking too much? The answer to that question is no. One of the authors of these electoral areas is none other than Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, a man who is not known for his Tory thoughts. In his own words, "The better the sooner." He would no doubt encourage our politicians to enact this bill.

Premier Harris and his Common Sense Revolution inherited a real mess. In order to get Ontario back on track, his government has had to make many cuts — cuts in medical care, education, which I know firsthand all

about, justice and the civil service, cuts that have hurt but were necessary to get us back on track. By cutting 27 MPPs our government is leading by example. Can you think of any better example of leadership?

The proposed reduction of 27 MPPs has resulted in much howling and weeping from the opposition. Our NDP friends in particular are offended by this proposed change. I suggest to them that if the new boundaries offer too much of a challenge, then move over and let a man in.

Mr Sergio: How about a woman?

Mr Klein: They remind me of the time when my wife and I were travelling through the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and we stopped at a country general store. Standing on a porch sucking a straw was the storekeeper. Sound asleep on the porch was the storekeeper's hound dog, who had no legs. To be sociable, I said to the store keeper, "Nice dog you got there." "Yup," he replied. "What do you call him," I asked. "He ain't got a name," replied the storekeeper. "He can't come if you call him anyhow." That's the NDP. They ain't got a name.

I sincerely thank you for allowing me to make this submission to you today.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Klein. We have about 16 minutes for questions to figure out what kind of dog that was and other related questions on this issue. We'll start this round with the Liberal Party.

Mr Michael Brown: I appreciate one of the more entertaining of our presentations so far. I just want to follow on some of your comments. One of the things that has interested me is if in fact Ontario, unlike any other province in Confederation, believes that we should have the identical number of MPs to MPPs — and that's certainly a view — if that's the case and you believe that, would it not make sense then to use exactly the same election apparatus as Elections Canada?

Should not our rules be identical so that the returning officers can be identical, so that the entire system be identical, so that there would be, obvious to me, cost savings and the province just subletting the operation of the elections to Elections Canada? Would you not believe that to be a viable idea to at least investigate from a cost savings view?

Mr Klein: That is beyond my humble opinion, Mr Brown. I wish I could give you an opinion. However, I do not wish to have a federal system. Then we'd have the Liberals leading us.

Mr Michael Brown: Well, no. All I'm suggesting is maybe Elections Canada could contract to Elections Ontario. I'm not particularly interested. It just seems we have two election bureaucracies at the present time, a federal one and a provincial one. I'm suggesting, don't you think we should at least investigate melding them into one? It costs the taxpayers money to have two. There's only one taxpayer, and whether they're paid from federal coffers or provincial coffers, it all comes out of your wallet and my wallet.

Mr Klein: I have no opinion on that.

Mr Michael Brown: Okay.

Mr Wildman: The dog won't come.

Mr Michael Brown: I wonder if one of the reasons, and the Common Sense Revolution alludes to it, is that

to do this we'd save money on electoral lists, we'd save money on a number of things, not just the salaries or whatever of the MPPs but the actual operation of the election. Would it not be even more sensible, then, to run provincial and federal elections simultaneously, so that you would only have one election? The only cost would be a little longer ballot. No view on that?

Mr Klein: That's a little much, two elections going at the same time.

Mr Wildman: They do it in the US.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes, they even elect dog catchers at the same time.

Mr Klein: The Americans have that, do they? Well, if it works for them, why wouldn't it work for us?

Mr Michael Brown: If you went that far, we could have the municipal election at the same time too. There's a lot of savings here. If we want to save money, then there's a lot of savings. Don't you think we should be at least investigating that as a Legislature?

Mr Klein: Mr Wildman brought up that it is in the United States. If that is correct, it's worth looking into, yes.

Mr Michael Brown: Actually the Premier indicated that to me in the House the other day when I asked the question. I think if we have a look at this, there are a lot of ways to save money. On the other hand, there may be some downsides to each of those scenarios. I'm not competent at this point to know what they might be. But I think your thoughtfulness in not just giving me a direct answer and saying yes or no indicates that you might also have some concerns that there might be some downsides to it.

What I'm suggesting is, at the end of the day, if we're not sure we want to adopt all the federal election rules, including election rules on financing election campaigns, rebates to political parties, the whole ball of wax, if we're not doing that at the same time we're just *carte blanche* deciding that we want to change the boundaries, don't you have some concerns about changing one set of rules without changing the others to match those?

As somebody who is trying to wrap my head around how this would really work and what would really be in the interests of both the taxpayers and democracy, I have a lot more questions than I have answers. We could have school board elections at the same time.

Mr Klein: We won't have a school board to elect, by the sounds of it. We are going by the wayside, it looks like.

1030

Mr Michael Brown: Is that a good idea? For example, that's what we're talking about: less governance, whether it's municipal politicians, whether it's school board politicians, whether it's provincial politicians. The only people who have increased are actually the federal politicians, because there are now 103 rather than 99 MPs in Ontario after the redistribution. Do you think it's in the public's interest to get rid of school boards?

Mr Klein: No, definitely not. If you have about two hours, I'll tell you why. We don't know what they're going to do with us. All I know, to give you an example, if they think they're saving money by eliminating a trustee like me, who receives a \$3,380-a-year honorarium,

in comparison to trustees in Toronto who receive \$48,000 a year, I think I know where the saving is: not off in poor old central Algoma.

Mr Wildman: I agree with that comment, Frank. You and I have known each other for a number of years, and I know your work on the Central Algoma Board of Education. I'd like to pursue Mr Brown's question a little bit. It seems to me that you and I would agree that the Central Algoma Board of Education, as an example, has served the rural area very well. There are obvious improvements that could be made, but it has served the rural area very well, and I think we might agree that it would not be a good idea necessarily to apply southern Ontario solutions, such as eliminating trustees to save money, to northern Ontario. Wouldn't we? You're nodding yes.

If that's the case, then, why do you have a different view with regard to provincial representation? Why would you say it doesn't make sense to eliminate a rural board that serves its community fairly well but it does make sense to eliminate rural constituencies and northern Ontario constituencies in order to have closer to representation by population designed on the basis of growing populations in southern Ontario?

Mr Klein: What I am saying is, it would be nice to have our MPP in his current boundaries, but with money the way it is, he's got to go beyond those boundaries. It's just like me and the school board. I don't think it's a good idea eliminating me, but if they have to eliminate me in order to progress, so be it.

Mr Wildman: I'll finish off with an observation. I understand your position, but I'm afraid that the students and the parents of central Algoma probably would not be served as well if they were part of a much larger board that had a large urban component in it.

Mr Klein: True.

Mr Wildman: I think the same goes provincially.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Mr Klein, I will, as strongly as I can, defend your right to come before us here today and make your presentation. That is my commitment to democracy. Actually, I'm impressed with the fact that you did a bit of homework in terms of touching base with some of your neighbours and fellow citizens out in your area and brought forward some of their views to us today, and the question I want to ask you is in that vein.

Why, in an exercise that will so fundamentally change the way areas across this province are represented at Queen's Park — I mean, a diminishing of 27 members at a time the population of the province is growing, no matter what measure you use, is a diminishing of people's ability to have their voice heard.

We had — with Remembrance Day not so long ago — people who left this country to fight for democracy, lost their lives for democracy. Why, in making this fundamental change, would it seem appropriate to do it in less than two months without the usual, traditional, arm's-length commission that goes out and talks to people and hears from people and comes back with a recommendation to the Legislature? After all, there is somewhat of a vested interest here. What's your view of that? Are you comfortable with the fact that we're doing this so quickly as

opposed to taking the time that I feel, respectfully, is necessary if we're going to make the kind of change that's reflected in this piece of —

Mr Klein: Mr Martin, I think I answered that question earlier in my statement when I quoted our Prime Minister, "The better the sooner."

Mr Wildman: But he's increasing the number of MPs in Ontario.

Mr Klein: Who? Canada? Are there more MPs now than we had before?

Mr Wildman: Yes. We had 99 and it's going to 103.

Mr Klein: That doesn't affect our riding, because Mr St Denis has the same riding as you would, and Mr Brown.

Mr Wildman: There's going to be one fewer in northern Ontario, but there are going to be a total of four more across the province.

Mr Stewart: Mr Klein, in my strange mind, I was sitting here thinking about what you could call that dog. You could suggest that that fellow call it either "Stay" or "Sit."

You've been, I assume, a police officer for many years. During that time, was there ever any time that you made any changes? When you started back 30 or 40 years ago, I assume there were some changes as you went along. Is that reasonable?

1040

Mr Klein: I was trained by the old-school cops, the Depression and Second World War veterans a completely different breed than what is now training them.

Mr Stewart: My point, though, is that you did change and you changed with the times.

What we're hearing here today and over the last few days is that it's a distance factor. I want to put on the record that I travel this country, and any time people feel they're only sending people up here from Toronto — I represent a rural riding and I travelled this country for about 10 years. I travelled to Wawa and White River and all of them, so I know the area fairly well, but it was a time that the roads were not a hell of a lot — so I know a bit about this country and I appreciate the concerns up here.

One of the things that seems to be coming out is the distance factor. I believe you have to do things a little differently. You don't drive from here to the end of the boundary today to see somebody and then turn around and go home and then go back up the next day and the day after that. What we have to do is find better and more efficient ways of doing business. If Bill 81 does go through in some form, that's the kind of thing the MPPs up here will have to look at, much the same as I have to do. We've got to find different ways of doing business than we have in the past. Would you agree with that?

Mr Klein: I agree with that. Particularly in this day and age, it shouldn't be as hard as, say, 10 years ago, with the great improvement in communications. With the fax machines, computers, it should be a lot easier.

Mr Stewart: Also, we've heard many comments about the fact that we are infringing on democracy. Of course, one of our democratic rights is to vote, and we heard yesterday from an electoral returning officer that it is the responsibility of that officer to make sure the people of the riding have the right to vote.

Do you believe, as an ex-police officer who was in a very democratic profession, that we are infringing on the democratic rights of the people, whether it be in the north or the south or the east or the west?

Mr Klein: No.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you for the presentation. We've heard considerable discussion yesterday and today about the distances and the number of community organizations that a northern member must meet with, the number of municipalities, the number of school boards and the number of health councils and so forth, because of the large geographic area. If that is one of the problems, if, as the riding size increases, we also decrease the number of those organizations the members are meeting with, will that help them get around to get the views of more people? Instead of Mr Wildman having to attend two different school boards in the area, if it was one board, would one meeting do twice as much as it presently does?

Mr Klein: The one board they are proposing would take in from Echo Bay, 15 miles east of here, all the way to Manitoulin Island, including Manitoulin Island. A trustee in Echo Bay, if he had to go to, say, Gore Bay for a meeting, would have to travel about 200 miles. So Mr Wildman would be affected by this travelling distance too.

Mr Hardeman: I would agree with you that that's not necessarily the appropriate way to do it with the education, but from the member's point of view, if he had fewer and more concentrated groups to meet with, would that not help his ability to talk to the majority of the public?

Mr Klein: I suppose so.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Klein, for coming in and giving us your witty and insightful remarks on this subject.

Mr Klein: Thank you for having me.

EDWARD SADOWSKI

The Acting Chair: Mr Edward Sadowski is next. You have 20 minutes in which to make your views known. Please proceed.

Mr Edward Sadowski: I have a written statement here and a letter to Mr Jack Carroll that I'll pass on to the committee after I'm done.

I want to thank you for inviting me to meet with you today. As you know, one of the commitments this government made was to consult with the people of Ontario with regard to government policy surrounding change and implementing change in this province. That is why I have chosen to speak to you here today on what is, I believe, one of the most significant challenges that the citizens of this province face in light of the speed at which this government is implementing change.

I would like to outline two major concerns I have surrounding this government's policy of expediting change and what it means in concrete terms.

My primary concern is with the process. From what I can ascertain from media reports, I'm not alone in feeling left out of the process. I feel I have not been given enough time to prepare a proper presentation to this standing committee.

In preparing for my presentation here, I have tried to follow the procedures as outlined in the government ad which appeared in the Sault Star of 13 November 1996. This ad stated that this committee would be holding hearings the week of 18 November here in Sault Ste Marie. The ad also advised me that in order to get a copy of Bill 81, I would need to place an order with Publications Ontario. When I placed the order on Thursday 14 November, Publications Ontario told me that it would take seven to 10 days before my order would be processed. On Friday 15 November, I inquired at both official government depository libraries here in town — the city public library and the Wishart Library at Algoma University College — to see if they had a copy of Bill 81. They did not.

On Monday 18 November, I contacted the constituency office of my MPP. They advised me that they did not have a copy of Bill 81 but they would try and get me a copy through their research department. On Wednesday 20 November, the constituency office notified me that they received a copy of the bill and that they would forward it to me through the mail.

Now, as I sit here in front of this committee, I cannot make a proper presentation on Bill 81 because I have not yet seen a copy of Bill 81. I find this to be a ridiculous situation. I, a citizen of this province who wants to participate in the political process, cannot offer an informed opinion to a provincial committee on an important matter such as this. I strongly believe that this government's policy of putting an emphasis on speed and efficiency has in effect restricted my fundamental freedom of opinion and expression as guaranteed under section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This government's attempt at utilizing a policy of trickle-down economics has failed to close the divide between the haves and have-nots in this province, and in effect that gap has grown wider.

This government's attempt at adapting this policy to what I call trickle-down politics has clearly proven to be dangerous to the Canadian democracy. The control of information by putting time restraints on the process has only increased the divide between the knows and the know-nots, a clear violation of our constitutionally protected rights and freedoms.

My second concern surrounds the underrepresentation of women, disabled people and the poor in our provincial political institutions. From what I can understand from media reports and from the official government ad, the provincial electoral districts in northern Ontario will be enlarged to match those of the federal government. If this is true, I find this to be a direct attack against women, disabled people and the poor. I feel this would be a highly discriminatory practice to prevent these politically disadvantaged groups from participating in politics.

Our present democracy provides that all citizens have the equal right to participate in the political process. This is guaranteed by section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In practice, many social interests are not represented. Only a few seek elected office and try to provide input in the policymaking process by making presentations to a committee such as this. Subtle

structural, social and political practices hinder full political participation by all citizens.

1050

Larger electoral districts will create extra expenses for women, disabled people and the poor. Granted, extra expenses will also be borne by able-bodied working men as well. However, women, disabled people and the poor, on average, have less or no access to financial resources that able-bodied working men have. They have fewer personal resources and financial security and weak or no established networks to allow them to compete effectively. Able-bodied working men have better access to corporate donors and business contacts. Women have greater child care costs and, along with the constraints of motherhood, larger electoral districts will mean longer times away from the home and family. Combined with the fact that they have less of a chance of getting a bank loan because they have no jobs or low-paying jobs, these additional restrictions will severely limit their chances of competing on an equal playing field with able-bodied working men. These increased expenses will threaten any political gains women, disabled people and the poor may achieve in participating in the political process.

In conclusion, freedom of opinion and expression includes freedom of access to all information pertinent to the ideas and beliefs sought to be expressed. This government's policy of trying to rush through this legislation by restricting my opinion and expression, by restricting its content, ie, by not allowing me reasonable time to view the information and conduct research for me to form an opinion, is clearly unconstitutional.

Discriminatory practices against women, disabled and poor people are unconscionable. Measures should be taken to enhance political representation of these groups within the existing system of electoral districts in northern Ontario.

The main point is that the purpose of the right to participate in the electoral process enshrined in the charter is not equality of voting power per se but the right to effective representation. Thank you.

Mr Martin: I think you make some very interesting points that are important to be made. It's just unfortunate that, given the difficulty you've described in preparing for today, at the end of the day you still only have 20 minutes in which to make your view known.

This is fundamental change we're going through here in a democratic system of government. To lower the number of representatives by 27 at a time when the population of a jurisdiction is increasing is certainly not in keeping with what normally happens in other jurisdictions.

The question I want to put to you is around the issue you've raised: how this is done. Traditionally in Ontario and in Canada, and the federal government did this, every so often, particularly after a census is taken, an exercise is entered into by government to see if there's change that needs to be made to the way we represent ourselves. I think that's necessary and healthy in a democracy. We need to do that. Nobody is suggesting for a second that we don't need to make change in that way. As a matter of fact, when we make change it hopefully reflects some of the sophistication we have around us today, by way of

information and knowledge and communications, to enhance as opposed to take away from.

We're rushing a bill through the Legislature, and it's consistent with everything else we've done for the last year and a half, that's going to change fundamentally the way we do democracy, in about two months. Traditionally we set up a commission that goes out to the province, takes all kinds of time and hears from all kinds of people, considers all kinds of scenarios. We have rep by pop, a very simple first-past-the-post system. There's also proportional representation that we could take a look at, but we're not going to do that at this time.

We're breaking from tradition in another way. Normally in governments up until this one we would bring in legislation in a session of the Legislature, bring it to second reading and in the intersession take it out for public consultation when there's lots of time and people have time to get their hands on the bill, do research and then come forward and really be helpful to us as we make these decisions.

In hearing that and probably already knowing that, and knowing that the federal government did their commission and considered all kinds of things in coming up with the numbers they did, including promises and agreements that were made over the years to places like PEI to make sure they still have representation, what's your response?

Mr Sadowski: I cannot comment on the federal process because I've not had enough time to look at that. My complaint is the process that is presently in place here. I don't even have a copy of the bill. I've not seen it. Your government advertised this in the paper last week. I went through the process of trying to get that information, trying to participate in the political process here, yet I have not been able to get a copy of this bill. How can the government on one hand advertise that a committee is coming to town, "If you want a copy of the bill, please go through Publications Ontario," and here I am today, in front of you — I'm not apologizing for it because I was ready to see what was in the contents of that bill and maybe do a little bit of research to see, if you're going to be using federal boundaries, for example, how the federal government did ascertain how those boundaries were set.

You have to realize that I live in the Algoma district. It takes me almost an hour to drive here to discuss this matter with you. Mail is slow. Everything takes time up here, and if you're going to make these radical changes it's going to require time on our part to do some research to get informed on what is actually going on with the changes this government is proposing.

I only get these bits and scraps of information in the paper. Yesterday's paper said this government wants this legislation passed by Christmas. Even if I wanted to submit a written report after I got a copy of the bill, I still would not have enough time to do that. We're looking at less than four weeks before Christmas comes around.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much, Mr Sadowski. I think you've made our case in large measure. I'm somewhat intrigued that you wouldn't have thought of the first thing to do: phone your MPP's office. We've heard on all the hearing dates that they are just swamped and

they're indispensable and that the first line of contact is their office. Let me just tell you that bills are normally printed within one day of their being introduced in the House. The date is October 1. Every member of the Legislature got one on the same day. If their office doesn't have one, it is absolutely distressing and unconscionable that they wouldn't have it in their office as a resource to you.

Let's start from that premise right there. A press release went out to every newspaper, and you strike me as someone who is both interested and somewhat knowledgeable about politics. No doubt if you get any of the newspapers, and I could go through the list — I've got the clippings of every one in the north — the Sault newspaper had it in detail, then came out with an editorial, and since then the sitting members throughout the north have written their own op ed pieces.

There's been no doubt that the community knew about the bill. There was also no doubt that we were going to bring the bill forward. May 1994 is when we made the commitment to do what we're doing. June 8 was when we were elected. Quite frankly, this bill could have been the first piece of legislation brought forward last September.

I'm somewhat intrigued why you wouldn't have gone to your MPP's office and why you wouldn't see that the biggest failing of all the problems you've cited here today is that your local member did not provide the service he's being paid to do.

Mr Sadowski: My MPP provided that service. I contacted him.

Mr Gilchrist: You said you don't have a copy of the bill.

Mr Sadowski: When I contacted his office on Monday they told me they did not have a copy of the bill and that they would be able to fax me a copy once they got the research department working on it. I do not have a fax. The only way people can access me is through the mail. Their office is out in Haydon, I believe. I live out in Deborah area. That's almost an hour-and-a-half drive between my place and there, and I'm not going to drive that far to get a copy of the bill, nor am I going to spend money on trying to get a fax sent out. I don't have access to a fax where I am. They provided me that service and within three — they would have sent me out something right away. However, I cannot afford that technology, having a fax machine.

With regard to this committee my complaint was, if you heard what I had to say, with the process. You advertised that this committee would sit here in Sault Ste Marie today. This ad was in the paper a week ago Wednesday. I followed the procedure as your government outlined in that ad. That process broke down. I did not get a copy of the bill from Publications Ontario. Your ad did not stipulate that I had to contact my MPP. I did that on my own. I also went to the government depository libraries in town. They do not have a copy of this bill.

Mr Young: Mr Sadowski, I want to tell you something. Half the world would give anything to live in this province, anything. For you to come here and say that you don't have freedom of expression is absolutely ridiculous. There are unlimited numbers of ways that you

can participate in the political system and make your views known: telephone, letters, face-to-face contacts, committees, political action committees, political parties. It's absolutely unlimited. For you to come here and compare us to a country where there are not freedoms is absolutely ridiculous.

Mr Sadowski: You tell that to women, disabled people and the poor. They do not have political representation.

Mr Young: You don't know how good you've got it, and a lot of people in this province realize how good we have it.

Mr Sadowski: Coming from a white man's perspective, yes, I agree, but not from their perspective. The majority of people in this province does not have proper political representation in the Legislature. This committee should be looking at other avenues to increase that political participation by looking at aspects of proportional representation rather than enlarging the electoral districts of this province, especially in northern Ontario.

1100

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for taking the time to appear. I think you've struck on a point that is critical to what we're doing here today: The government wants this bill before the end of the fall session. Normally a committee such as this would not sit while the Legislature was actually in session at Queen's Park. This is highly unusual because a time line is being arbitrarily set by the government to get this through.

Normally these hearings, if there were to be hearings, would be held by committee in the winter intersession, which would give people time lines they should be able to meet. We have to wonder how serious the government is in having these hearings and having them on the kind of time line that is before us today. If this is just window dressing by the government to say, "Oh yes, we had some hearings," I don't know why I'm here and I wonder why you're here, because to me that is offensive to everyone. They would have been better to say, "No hearings," if they did not intend to make any substantial amendments to this bill.

I think a lot of people are saying: "Well, the government made this promise in their election document. They're keeping some of their promises and they're not keeping some of their promises." Maybe this is one they should think about a little bit before they keep it. What's annoying here is that you notice in the federal redistribution the difference to northern Ontario is that we've gone from 11 seats to 10. The difference provincially is from 15 to 10, a third.

If you look at where the constituencies are that are being eliminated or amalgamated, they are the rural constituencies. Mr Martin's constituency of Sault Ste Marie isn't affected at all. Mr Bartolucci's constituency of Sudbury isn't. The people losing representation are in the rural north. The people who might be first nations people, who might be in small mining camps, who might be prospectors, who might be any of the communities down the North Shore, any of the communities in the Manitouwadge area are the people losing representation.

What's offensive to me is the very point you're making: that we're here; some of our presenters have not had the opportunity. Many more people may have wanted

to present if there had been adequate lead time. I have a feeling nothing is changing and I'm wasting the public's dollars by being here, you're taking time out of your busy schedule to come, and what are we gaining? If I hear a message from you, that's what the message is.

Mr Sadowski: I agree with everything you've said. I am actually taken aback by Mr Young's comment that this government does not put restrictions on my freedom of opinion and expression. If this government withholds information which prevents me from forming a proper and educated opinion on what this government is doing, they are violating my section 2(b) constitutional rights.

Interjection.

Mr Sadowski: Yes, Mr Young, what did you have to say? "No"?

Mr Young: It was in the bill. Your MPP didn't get you a copy of the bill.

Mr Sadowski: No, this government did not provide me with that bill, sir.

The Acting Chair: Mr Sadowski, we're dealing with Mr Brown's question.

Mr Sadowski: I answered, and I agree with his comments.

The Acting Chair: Mr Brown, another question?

Mr Michael Brown: No more questions.

The Acting Chair: Do you have a letter that you want to leave with the clerk for us?

Mr Sadowski: Yes, I have a letter and a copy of my statement to you, if you can direct me to whom I should leave it with.

The Acting Chair: All right. Pat, can you pick it up?

Mr Wildman: Mr Chair, on a point of privilege: I just want to make it clear that in response to Mr Sadowski's request for a copy of the bill I offered to fax it to him. Unfortunately he didn't have access to a fax, so we had to mail it to him. That's a fact of the distances we have in northern Ontario.

The Acting Chair: So noted.

Mr Martin: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I was wondering — this is my second day on the committee — if the process is one that sees people take advantage of the very small window of opportunity to actually come and be part of this process and then be badgered by members of the committee in the way that this member has been this morning. Is that going to be the norm, or are we going to have some semblance of —

The Acting Chair: Mr Martin, I don't consider that there was badgering. In point of fact —

Mr Martin: You might want to ask —

The Acting Chair: Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: I have the floor right now.

The Acting Chair: Are you challenging the Chair?

Mr Martin: I'm making a point of order.

The Acting Chair: Okay, make your point of order.

Mr Martin: If you're trying to make a judgement of that kind, you might want to check with the witness to ascertain whether it was badgering or not. It is a tradition, in the six years I've been in this job, that we are respectful of people who take the time and make the effort to come and present, that we ask them questions of clarification and we try to find out just exactly what it is they're trying to say. To badger witnesses and to be abusive of

witnesses is not usually the tradition, but then, we're not following much tradition these days anyway, I suppose, so I shouldn't be surprised.

Mr Gilchrist: So it's only appropriate to badger government supporters.

Mr Martin: We're not badgering anybody.

The Acting Chair: Thank you for your point of order. Thank you, Mr Sadowski, for submitting your views.

Mr Wallace, are you prepared to come forward and make your submission now? We're ready for you.

Mr Ted Glenn: If I could just have the committee's attention for a second, I have distributed to each caucus a copy of selected pages from a recent current issues paper which describes the effects of the changes to the boundaries in northern Ontario. If you have any further questions about that document, get in touch with your caucus representative or talk to me. One copy was distributed to each caucus.

CHESTER WALLACE

The Acting Chair: Mr Wallace, you have 20 minutes to utilize as you see fit.

Mr Chester Wallace: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

The Acting Chair: You can take it all up yourself or if you have a limited submission, then people from the committee will have questions for you.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, allow me one second, please. It is fine and dandy to provide one copy to one member of each caucus, but with all due respect, if we want to do our job and do it properly and give an opportunity to the people to be listened to properly and make their submissions properly, this information should be provided to each and every one.

Mr Gilchrist: It came to your office.

The Acting Chair: Mr Gilchrist, please. Continue.

Mr Sergio: Deputants have been asking for this information here so they could know the government's position, what they are proposing. I appreciate this is the first time we have seen this. This is the information that deputants have been asking for at every meeting: What is the government's position? Do we have any information? One of our members here sitting at the table this morning said, "Do they give us any information? What is the government proposing?" With all due respect, Mr Chairman, I find this useful but late, and in future sittings I hope that information is provided in time to everyone.

1110

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Chairman, on that point: This is an information piece that has been made available and notice was sent to every member's office when it was published back in October. If the member didn't bother ordering it from legislative research —

Mr Sergio: Those people out there didn't get it.

Mr Gilchrist: This is not something —

Mr Sergio: You are always the only one at this table who argues every point.

Mr Gilchrist: Who is the one interrupting now?

Mr Sergio: The deputants don't have this information because you people don't want the people to have this information.

The Acting Chair: Mr Sergio, please.

Mr Wallace: Ladies and gentlemen, as a former teacher, I don't need this. I can tell you right now, you be quiet while I'm talking. You too. Do you hear me? If not, I will ask you to leave, and if you don't leave, I'll pick you up and throw you right out that door. You've taken up two minutes of my time, you characters. Oh yes, silence. Brown, don't you open your mouth, you're talking to an old haw eater.

The Acting Chair: Mr Wallace, proceed.

Mr Wallace: Thank you. Mr Chairman, excuse me if I act as a teacher at times but I was one for a good many years and my classrooms were very well conducted, unlike your present —

The Acting Chair: Do you want to sit down, please?

Mr Wallace: Pardon?

The Acting Chair: Would you prefer to stand or sit down?

Mr Wallace: Oh, same difference. I can stand or sit.

The Acting Chair: It's easier for the communications.

Mr Wallace: Oh, sorry. Can everyone hear me now?

The Acting Chair: Yes.

Mr Wallace: Good. Very good, ladies and gentlemen. By the way, it's nice to see some ladies here today. I find that it's easier to talk to them, they're more sensible than most men, and besides, they're a damn sight better looking.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Chairman, it's a pleasure to be here. I am a former high school teacher. I came into this country just after the Second World War, to Manitoulin, with the Ontario Paper Co. I worked out of Thorold, a very fine company too. I'd still be with them if they were still in this area. I lived on Manitoulin Island, Coburn Island. I now reside on St Joseph Island. I married a Manitoulin lady who left me a couple of years ago. I'm now a widower. But I know more of Mike Brown's constituents than he does, and the same is true of Bud Wildman. I've lived up and down these lines for so many years. I've lived here most of my life and I'm going to die here, I'm happy to say.

I'm a senior citizen. I'm 70 years of age. I help run a maple syrup operation on St Joe Island right now. I'm retired from the high school teaching system. I'm still a member of the OSSTF, which is one of the toughest, strongest unions in this country, and I helped make it that way because when I first started teaching they were not very powerful. Now, as you know, the teachers' federations are together and they're tougher than any Steelworkers or United Auto people or anything else I know of. If you want to prove it, just drop around if they call me forward again. I'll darn soon let you know who's got some clout.

My background is both management and labour and finally teaching and, as such, I've run into a great many wonderful people up and down this line, including Bud Wildman and Mike Brown. Brown has buried several of my in-laws over on Manitoulin, but you're going to have to wait for a while for me.

In any case, ladies and gentlemen, I came here today hoping to improve things in Ontario. I love Ontario. I'm a Canadian. I survived the Second World War by not having to go overseas, I was too young. This is a won-

derful country we have. Mind you, it has been mismanaged to some extent, I must say that. I am an honest person, I say it like I see it, but my own thoughts today should be secondary, as far as I'm concerned, and they will be.

First of all, I have been up and down this line — I say this line and when I speak of that I talk all the way from the Lakehead right through to Sudbury. That's where we sell our syrup, back and forth and across the country, and I know a great many people, as I say, and they are thoughtful people, knowledgeable people, a good cross-section. I'm going to give you their thoughts, not mine. I'm just one person and I'm getting on. I might be dead tomorrow. Who knows? After all, when you get to be 70 you've reached your three score years and ten and you should be happy with that. Maybe, maybe not, I don't know.

One point that has come forth across the country where I've been in contact with people, without exception, people agree that government spending must be cut and that a reduction in the number of MPPs is a step in the right direction. Now, those are things that people are saying, and a lot of these things I've got right from Mr Wildman's and Mr Brown's constituents. They likely have heard this already. If I'm boring you fellows, excuse me because I know you fellows cover your constituency pretty well, but the rest of you should hear this too. Here again, that is what I get; that is, people tell me this.

The next thing, though new boundaries will create larger ridings, the federal system operates effectively and it seems insulting to suggest, this is what people tell me, that our MPPs would not be able to function as effectively as their federal counterparts. The widespread opinion is that, for instance, Mr Wildman, as an example, is more than capable of meeting the challenge. A good many of these people told me this, so I pass it on to you.

Now, Mr Brown, I don't know, I'm not quite sure in your case because, frankly, some of the comments of the haw eaters about Mr Brown are — well, I won't repeat them in front of you dear, sweet young things, he said. Haw eaters are a tough race of people, remember. They're islanders, eh, and it takes an old tough guy like me to deal with them. Half that island are my in-laws, so I've got to be very careful when I'm over there.

The next thing is that people expect government in Ontario to be streamlined. Most people say, "You know, the Common Sense Revolution that this Mike Harris is talking about, we want to see it happen." Common sense. Here again, I'm not just talking about business people. I deal with a lot of them too, but when I go to these home shows and I go to country fairs with our syrup from St Joe Island, all across the country, the Massey fair, for instance, in your riding, Mr Brown, and so on, up to the fair at the Lakehead, I cover a lot of territory even though I'm old, he said. Thank God, he said, for a good van that will get me around in a hurry.

But people are saying this. They want this province streamlined. They've put up with enough falderal, foolish, oddball, no-account and this, here again, I'm quoting, oddball rules and regulations that have stifled everything under the sun. That's what they say. Now, if you don't like it, folks, see me later. See me out back. Roll up your

sleeves. I'm not as good as I used to be but I can manage, I think.

Here again, they want the Common Sense Revolution that was promised and they figure it's the government's responsibility to lead by example, but 90% of the people say: "We all have to tighten our belts if we're to have a healthy province in the future, without exception." That includes — you know, this may sound crazy. I'm a former teacher, retired teacher, but a lot of teachers that I run across say this same thing, "We've all got to tighten our belts."

That may surprise you because a lot of teachers at the head of things are screaming and yodelling and squawking like a bunch of chickens, you know, but a lot of good commonsense teachers are still in this province and they realize we all have to tighten our belts. Every one of us and you folks in power, in opposition, remember this. It won't hurt you; it won't hurt you at all.

1120

Another thing that I was told by these various people: Duplication of federal and provincial electoral districts, the average person feels, will save a lot of money. An example that has been mentioned a great many times to me is election lists. If you have the same election boundaries, you have the same election lists, you have a big saving right there, not two groups of people running around getting names, yippety-yippety-yip. People consider that this is a step in the right direction: federal and provincial people getting together for the good of the average taxpayer. This is what they're saying. They say, in other words, that it is encouraging to see the Conservatives adopt the federal electoral boundaries and that here again hopefully this is the first step towards proper cooperation between two levels of government, federal and provincial.

I heard — and this is my own opinion, not the opinion of people. I didn't ask them about this; I wasn't talking about this. But someone was mentioning a little question about why not have just one level of government and so on and so forth? Why have provincial; why have federal? Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a huge country here. From shore to shore, it's over 3,000 miles across. You have a tremendously diverse group of people and you couldn't possibly go with one election for everything. Your time zones, for instance: If you went by that even, you'd still have too big and unwieldy a situation. You have to have one central government in this land of ours, and mind you, you have to have your provinces.

Here again another thing, though. I listened to a very, very interesting man speak on Canada AM this morning. I don't know how many of you listen to Canada AM, but I do every morning. I spend an hour in front of my TV. It's the one time of the day that I listen to the darn fool TV. The rest of the time it's a bunch of junk usually anyway.

But here again — just my opinion; no offence anybody — this chap came on who had been on the federal commission to review the aboriginal situation, and they just finished off with a \$50-odd-million report. This gentleman made sense. He said that very same thing. He said we're a diverse society. What's wrong with having the aboriginal peoples as another province even though

they're split up here and there and all over the place? Here again you've got to do something with them. Half of that Indian population, or aboriginal or native population, whatever you want to say, are under 15. There's thousands of them. If you don't do something now, as he said, 30 years from now, as Mercredi said last night, there'll be chaos, crisis and then some. You've got to do something about it now.

For that, we need a strong central government, not just provincially. Provincially, no, no. We need a good, strong central government federally to do something about that, with the provinces helping, though, not just sitting back and yipping and yapping and groaning and moaning and saying, "Oh, we can't do this because of this, that and the other thing." Ridiculous. For goodness' sake.

If I was like that with my kids and my family or my clan, holy Moses, you'd have chaos. You sit down and you do the right thing, and you listen to people who are smarter than you are, like that chap on Canada AM this morning. There's a man who knows something. He's studied the situation and he's knowledgeable, and that's who you go to when you need help.

The new boundaries — excuse me. I'll get back to the situation. I hope I don't run over, Mr Chairman. Just cut me off any time. I'm used to that anyway. The bell at recess: chong, chong. You have to shut up and tell the kids, "See you tomorrow."

The Acting Chair: You have six minutes left, Mr Wallace.

Mr Wallace: Thank you. I'll get on with it.

The other big thing that people have told me is that government is too large, too expensive, and not efficient enough, and it's got to become more efficient, less expensive, smaller in size and more cost-effective. Simple as that. It's got to be done if Ontario especially is going to go ahead and become the leader of industry and jobs and every other thing that it has been in the past. I'm calling on history here, too and my own experience: Leslie Frost's time, Second World War. End of the Second World War, why did Ontario jump ahead? Because they were smart enough to say, around Toronto especially: "Okay, boys, come on in. We've got free land, or darn near free. We've got hydro that isn't going to cost you anything. We've got lots of water. We've got a workforce here. We're going to keep these boys that came back from overseas." They're going to be here and, by God, you've got the best workforce in the world at a decent rate of pay.

No big unions at that time. Didn't need them, really. They had a few locomotive engineers and so on but, here again, everything went ahead for Ontario. Montreal did the exact opposite. They sat back and they whined: "You've got to pay for this and you've got to pay for that, and if you want this road paved, you'll have to pay so much damn graft to get it done." I kid you not. I was born, by the way, in Montreal. I'm an anglo from Huntingdon county, southern side of Quebec province. That's where I got my start, and if you think that you've got a bunch of tough characters up here, up north, or that Manitoulin is tough, you go down there to that clan that I'm part of. They'll show you what tough is. They'll be in part of Canada 100 years from now, too, by the way.

You don't need to worry about that area splitting off or anything like that. But, by gosh, ladies and gentlemen, this is what people are saying. Excuse me, I get to digress here.

This next point, and here, fellows, some of you are going to maybe — I hope there are no tomatoes around. You're going to throw something at me yet. The MPPs, and this is what the people are saying, with their gold-plated pensions, tax exemptions, perks, more than one person of every walk of life has said they're the sacred cows of society, and we don't need any sacred cows here. We're not in India. That's it.

Most people consider, too, at least 80% of the people, that a smaller number of cabinets and smaller cabinets are a step in the right direction. A reduction in red tape by so doing, that will be wonderful. Red tape is the curse of our society. That's what they say.

The money that will be saved by eliminating the 27 MPPs, what has been given to the public, is \$400,000 by 27, almost \$11 million. Now, the public remembers that \$11-million figure, by gosh.

The Acting Chair: You have one minute left.

Mr Wallace: Oh, sorry. Thank you. The boundaries being established by a non-partisan group, everybody favoured that. Wonderful. Okay? Now, when I asked them, "What do you think of MPPs that voted against the bill?" they said, "Any member concerned with cutting costs and reassessing and improving the electoral system voted for the bill regardless of their ilk, creed, colour, whatever." That's what they expected, and a lot of your people, Mr Brown and Mr Wildman, said the same thing, people that voted for both of you.

The Acting Chair: Thirty seconds, Mr Wallace.

Mr Wallace: Thank you. Finally, as a practical way to cut costs — I did it myself today. I submit one copy of what I have just given you rather than the proposed 30 just to cut costs. And remember, I'm a pensioner. I can't afford all these odds and ends of making up all these copies, you know? I'm on a pension, a miserable, measly teacher's pension. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Wallace, for your enlightening and entertaining views.

Our next presenter is Mr Bouliane.

Mr Wallace: We'd have had room for questions if those characters hadn't taken up two or three of my minutes.

The Acting Chair: Mr Wallace, you got your full time.

1130

UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA, LOCAL 2251

The Acting Chair: Mr Bouliane is representing Local 2251 of the United Steelworkers of America. You have 20 minutes, Mr Bouliane, to present your views. You can take up all the time, or whatever time is left we'll divide equally by the three caucuses.

Mr Ronald Bouliane: I'm here today to represent the interests of United Steelworkers of America, Local 2251, which is the largest union local in the district of Algoma, either public or private sector. My name is Ron Bouliane and it has fallen to me to express the extreme concern

and the dismay with which the members of my union view the proposal to eliminate up to five northern ridings and in some cases to vastly increase the size of the remaining ridings to the point where some of them exceed the size of certain provinces, states, and even national jurisdictions. How can this be construed as better serving the constituents of the areas affected?

When the electoral boundaries commission decided in 1983 that northern Ontario should have no fewer than 15 ridings, it did so for a reason. That reason was to ensure that the citizens who resided within what is geographically and politically considered northern Ontario were adequately and fairly represented in the Ontario Legislature and that their concerns would be dealt with in an expeditious manner. In other words, the people here in the north would be made to feel that they were part of the democratic process and that their concerns would be taken seriously. This was done by the Conservative government of Bill Davis in a move to more fairly represent the people who reside in the north and was designed to be inclusive.

In the past, the terms of reference usually used by the commission when considering redistribution are as follows:

- (1) community or diversity of interests;
- (2) means of communication;
- (3) topographical features;
- (4) population trends;
- (5) the varying of the rural electoral districts;
- (6) existing boundaries of municipalities or wards;
- (7) special geographical considerations such as the sparsity, density or growth rate of populations within provincial regions. Accessibility, size and shape were also to be considerations.

The terms of reference also allowed for some latitude in determining the number of ridings, up to a maximum, to be allowed.

In 1983, with respect to the terms of reference, the north was guaranteed no fewer than 15 seats within the Legislature. As further indication that it was important that the number and size of the ridings be reflective of the reality of northern Ontario, even members of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party have in the past expressed concerns about effective representation. In 1992, Noble Villeneuve, who is now Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, agreed that it was necessary to limit the size of ridings to accommodate special circumstances and requirements of rural and isolated districts.

The Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, Ernie Eves, in 1985 stated that: "Beyond population sizes, equally valid considerations should be taken into account. That is geography. We shouldn't just focus entirely on population." The Premier, Mike Harris himself, argued in 1992 that besides population, the community of interest in west Nipissing should be examined and that it was not acceptable to move the francophone community out of the riding in west Nipissing simply on the basis of population, that community of interests should be of some consideration. Odd that since the Progressive Conservative Party is now the government in this province, the very same arguments which they used when

they were sitting in opposition are no longer valid or are of no consideration any more.

Two northern Ontario members of Parliament, Réginald Bélair and Peter Thalheimer, both raised concerns about the size of their ridings with redistribution and combining with another riding. Mr Bélair stated, and I quote from Hansard: "The commission failed to consider the special geographic considerations in Cochrane-Superior and particularly the problems of size, the distance between communities...and the limited access constituents have to their member of Parliament. The commission failed to give adequate consideration to the demographics of the riding of Cochrane-Superior and erred in using an electoral quota as the sole factor for determining electoral districts."

Peter Thalheimer, the member for Timmins-Chapleau, concurred and said: "The commission failed to respect the criterion that a proposed electoral district be of manageable size for sparsely populated northern regions of the province of Ontario. The commission failed to consider factors other than population figures when proposing rural and northern ridings, including historical, cultural, economic, transportation and communication patterns."

Tony Martin and Bud Wildman, MPPs for Sault Ste Marie and Algoma respectively, have both gone on record as being opposed to the redistribution of northern electoral boundaries because of the difficulties which will arise when trying to effectively service the constituents of the much larger ridings. They have also expressed a great deal of concern about the erosion of democratic principles when power is taken away from people through the elimination of their elected representatives and placed in the hands of those at the executive level, who in effect become unelected representatives and, as such, may or may not be held accountable for their actions.

Many other MPPs from northern Ontario, both NDP and Liberal, have also voiced their objections to boundary redistribution for similar reasons. The only MPP to not voice concern about the unfairness of the present plan, and who hasn't stood up for the constituents of northern Ontario in the present situation, is the Premier, Mike Harris himself. But that is hardly surprising, as this is his idea in the first place.

With so many objections to electoral boundary redistribution being raised, one has to question why the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario would want to proceed with it. Three reasons come to mind:

(1) The members of the present government are truly ignorant about geographical and logistical difficulties in servicing present ridings, let alone the much larger ridings which are proposed.

(2) The members of the present government really don't care about what difficulties boundary redistribution will cause for the constituents of those areas affected because it is occurring in places where there is a certain amount of invisibility due to the remoteness of the area.

(3) The members of the present government view this as a chance to eliminate some opposition through an opportunity provided by the federal government and to follow through on the populist ideal that less government is better, even if the public interest is subservient to that ideal.

I believe the reason for proceeding with electoral boundary redistribution is a little of all three of the above.

Mr O'Toole, MPP for Durham East, suggests that any problems that are created with redistribution could be addressed by throwing more human and financial resources into the affected ridings. We could use some of those resources now, under the existing rules. So if you are offering these remedies, you must also be aware of the present problems that exist in servicing the constituents of these areas and, by extrapolation, you must also be aware that you would be causing even greater problems.

In conclusion, I would like to say that merely following the federal riding plan would be a grave injustice to the people of northern Ontario. Surely they deserve better than to be sacrificed for ideological purposes. If the population trends of the greater Toronto area and the Golden Horseshoe indicate that more elected representatives are there, then by all means determine what needs to be done, and in a fair and equitable fashion do it, but not at the expense of those in other areas who will undoubtedly suffer because of the loss of accessibility to their elected representatives.

1140

Just as a personal observation, I don't know how many of those on the government side of the House have travelled extensively in northern Ontario but I can tell you, from personal experience in travelling the Algoma riding with various people, that if you start at one end and go to the extreme other end, just across this riding, under the best of circumstances in Algoma it takes eight to 10 hours. Under adverse weather conditions it can take up to two or three days, depending upon road closures.

I also noted that one of the previous presenters mentioned something about communications. I happen to live in a rural area, and he's damned right about communications. I can honestly tell you that getting a letter from Sault Ste Marie to my place, which is 35 miles out of the Sault, can take anywhere from one to two weeks. The mail first has to leave here, then it gets sent to Sudbury, then down to Toronto or Ottawa and then all the way back.

A lot of us don't have access to faxes. Unfortunately certain sections of this part of the province are underserved with communications devices. I have a party line. I can't have a fax and I can't have a touch-tone phone, so I have a pretty severe limit on what I can and can't do. Fortunately enough for me I come into town every day and I can use or find facilities elsewhere, but as some other people have mentioned, it becomes a difficult circumstance.

If you're going to increase the size of these ridings, I think the proposed Algoma riding, if you follow the federal plan, would extend from I think almost Nairn Centre as far west as Marathon, and you're going to take an area that already would take you eight to 10 hours to cross and add at least another four to five hours on that, which becomes in winter, having done it myself, interminable and in some cases downright dangerous.

That's all I've got to say. I'm open to questions.

Le Président suppléant : Merci, Monsieur Bouliane, pour votre présentation. Il y a plusieurs questions pour vous.

Mr Sergio : Est-ce que vous dites, Monsieur le Président, que je dois faire ma question en français ?

Mr Bouliane : I'd rather have it in English. My father was Franco-Ontarian but my mother is anglophone.

Mr Sergio : I was only kidding.

Mr Michael Brown : Thank you very much for the presentation. They're trying to characterize the opposition in this as being opposed to a redistribution of constituencies, which is not the case. The opposition has suggested that we do what Leslie Frost decided to do in the 1950s and Mr Roberts decided to do in the 1960s and what every government of Ontario has done in recent memory: to redistribute on the basis of criteria in Ontario. We believe that to be a logical and intelligent way to go about it. If you look at what Mr Harris had said prior to the last redistribution, which happened for the 1987 election — before that, but for the 1987 election — he made all the points you just made and so did most Conservative members, if not all, who were sitting in Parliament at that time.

We're having some difficulty in understanding why it's necessary to go with a made-in-Ottawa solution which is based on the Canadian context. It's based on the context of Canada, on representing rural areas across the entire nation, not just in Ontario. When you do that and look at Prince Edward Island having four seats and the Northwest Territories with about 18,000 people or something having one, the realities in the federal context are obviously different from the realities in a provincial context. We have made a positive suggestion: Do what we've always done in Ontario. Have an election commission appointed, non-partisan, and redraw the boundaries on the basis of what Ontarians believe to be the most appropriate democracy.

One of the conditions would likely be that the north would have some kind of guarantee of the number of seats. Obviously the federal government has reduced the number of northern seats from 11 to 10. What we're looking at in this provincial redistribution is from 15 to 10, and those are the rural seats we've lost. The five seats that are lost are rural Ontario seats. Do you agree with that approach?

Mr Bouliane : I would certainly like to see a commission struck. I think the previous formats that were used, even if they appeared at times to be somewhat lengthy in their deliberations and perhaps questionable at times, in the end, once everyone has had their say and their input, there can't really be very much argument about redrawing the boundaries under those circumstances. If you reach a general consensus among the people who present before a commission or have had deliberations with the commission, even though at times it seems somewhat lengthy, I think you arrive at a much more fair decision. We would like to see a commission struck.

Mr Martin : Thank you very much. You certainly make some interesting observations. I think the package you have put together is quite detailed and speaks to me very clearly of the need for fuller consultation. You put on the table stuff we all have in our background information, but the public out there doesn't necessarily know or understand some of the considerations that, historically, have been taken into account when redistribution happened.

It's like Mr Brown has said: None of us are opposed to looking at this and from time to time rejigging, reworking the way we have representative democracy in this province. But to do it based on what the federal government is doing, who have far wider and different considerations than we would have in Ontario, seems to me to be a whole lot of things, but more than anything something we're doing in haste that we may regret in the not-too-distant future.

You make a point in your presentation that the northern federal members weren't happy with the way the whole thing shook out in the end re the federal distribution. As a matter of fact, when Ms Broad presented this morning she made the point: "Why take the lead from a bad example? Why follow a bad example?"

However, the federal government had the integrity, at least, to set up a commission. That commission, though, had different things to take into account than we would have in Ontario. It's Mr Thalheimer who mentions electoral quotas which speak to making sure that places like PEI and the territories all have adequate and proper representation in the federal House. That's why Ontario is dealt with in a certain way. For us to then be tied into that when we're looking at a completely different jurisdiction and trying to find a way to have proper representation for Ontario doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense.

What if Sault Ste Marie decided it was going to follow provincial boundaries and only have one, say, mayor? Would that be any more logical or consistent than what's happening here?

Mr Bouliane: I'm looking at percentages. I was looking at the federal reductions in northern Ontario as well as the provincial reductions and I noticed that even though northern Ontario lost a seat federally, it was only a 10% reduction in representation, I believe. It might be a little bit less. With this proposal in front of us it becomes somewhat more; it becomes a 30% or 33% reduction in representation.

Having seen what the federal members for those areas, Chapeau-Timmins and Cochrane-Superior, have had to say about it, they were not very pleased with the outcome. I believe Mr St Denis, the federal member for Algoma, expressed some reservations as well when he had the opportunity to tour the new federal riding. I think he was a little bit taken aback with the sheer size of the area. I would like to see something.

1150

Mr Tascona: Thank you for the presentation today. I'd like to make two comments. With respect to this idea in terms of reducing and streamlining the MPPs' role, certainly Mr Harris, our Premier — this was taken under consideration in the Common Sense Revolution document with over four years of public consultation. It wasn't his idea. It came from the public.

The second thing I'd like to say in terms of a point is that when your organization was streamlining — that's what we're doing as a government, we're streamlining — it certainly decreased the number of business agents throughout this province to adapt to the needs of its constituents. They certainly didn't consider geography when they decided to put out their business agents, because there's far less representation than they ever had,

as your organization. So it's interesting, in terms of streamlining, that you'd come here today and offer your comments when basically all we're doing is streamlining and trying to keep the representation in terms of geography and the members we have in terms of population. That's all I'd like to say.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you for your presentation. It seems to me the entire premise of your submission was based on the fact that you believe the process is flawed because it didn't consider those historical considerations that provincial boundaries commissions looked to in the past. I'd just like to read very briefly the mandate of the federal commission that we knew, at the time we made the commitment, was going around the province.

"The commission may depart from the quota where necessary or desirable to respect the community of interest or community of identity or the historical pattern, maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated rural or northern regions of the province...."

They go further than the provincial government ever did. They put some tangible barriers on the upper and lower quotient to prevent gerrymandering, to prevent the situation that exists today where Rainy River only has 19,000 voters, even though it's not very big — there are seven northern ridings today that are bigger. Al Palladini has 129,000 voters, six and a quarter times the workload. No one that can convince me that Howard Hampton, because he has to drive one and a half hours in each direction from his office, should have one sixth the population of Al Palladini who, by the way, is in a largely rural — it's a combination rural and urban riding and it's not all that small.

I just want you to know that had we done what Mr Brown is suggesting, we would have been duplicating exactly the terms of reference of the federal government. Some 300 people made submissions, including many people from the north, and if you read through the report, they listened and they responded.

Unless your suggestion is that it doesn't matter if you're close by phone or by car to the MP, that it doesn't matter for CPP issues or employment insurance or gun control or young offenders, that you don't have a reason to contact your MP but magically the MPP is somebody you need to be right next to, then I think it is very appropriate, in the context of exactly the sort of streamlining Mr Tascona talked about, which your organization has gone through, that we look at the incredible cost it would have been to duplicate what the federal government had already done and reflect the fact that they did a good job. They kept within their own guidelines which happen to be, as I say, even more defining than ours and they have come out with something and we're keeping our promise. That's basically the premise of everything behind this bill.

Mr Bouliane: I would like to respond to that, Mr Gilchrist. It's hardly surprising, your response, but I found it somewhat enlightening that Mr Bélair and Mr Thalheimer would take issue with what you've just said. They said it was not done fairly, so you have that coming from the northern members themselves. Unfortunately I realize that the presently sitting government only has one opinion, one sitting member from the north, whereas the Liberals and the NDP certainly have more than that, and they have had the experience of having to deal with things.

From a personal consideration I doubt very much whether people like Bud Wildman would have had the time or opportunity to help us in the restructuring of ASI which, thank God, they had that time and they had that opportunity, and we're saying it's paramount to have this accessibility. When you're talking about the federal ridings you're talking about a totally different area of responsibility. I think the provincial responsibilities are closer to home. They're more bread-and-butter issues. They're not as national in concept as the representatives in the federal Parliament. Their scope is much broader than what the MPPs in Ontario have. You people focus closer to home.

We're saying that in northern Ontario we come to depend on these people for many of our bread-and-butter-type issues.

Mr Gilchrist: Just for the record, neither of the MPs you mentioned voted against the redistribution bill.

Mr Bouliane: They didn't vote against it; I realize that. However, they expressed their grave reservations concerning it.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Bouliane, for coming and making your views known in your presentation today.

We will now recess until 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1157 to 1304.

SAULT STE MARIE AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL

The Acting Chair: We're dealing with Bill 81, and our first presenter this afternoon is Mr Eric Greaves of the Sault Ste Marie and District Labour Council.

Mr Eric Greaves: It is indeed a privilege to participate in the democratic process. I'm very lucky to be here on short notice, because I was quite busy until this morning. I'd like to thank Lynn Mellor for finding me, tracking me down by phone. I really appreciate the lengths to which she went to make sure I was able to be here today. I'd like to thank my local MPP, Tony Martin, and also his constituency office staff, and Bud Wildman also, because his constituency office provided me with a little background information when I asked for it.

I'd also like to express appreciation to the media. Channel 15 in particular is, as you know, the media channel which allows us far-flung citizens of the north to have a look at what's going on in government provincially. We do look at that, we do tune in to see what's going on when we can.

As you noticed from my introduction, I'm a member of labour council, and I've recently been privileged to speak with some people in the OFL who are involved at the moment on a fair tax campaign locally. They provided a kind of sounding board when I was trying to focus myself for this presentation.

Anyway, here we are in Sault Ste Marie looking at the upcoming legislation, the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996. As I understand it, we're talking in terms of eliminating duplication and saving money for the taxpayers of Ontario. This is the kind of issue that certainly appeals to the public in the present mood that has been engendered.

I would like to make a point about the title of the legislation, the Fewer Politicians Act. I know that showed

up in the Common Sense Revolution document, and I think most of us can agree that the stereotype is of politicians as perhaps not the most constructive people sometimes, and sometimes members of the public are involved in long and laborious processes the meaning of which is not necessarily easily understood. Probably anyone reading the Common Sense Revolution and coming across the phrase "fewer politicians" would buy right into it, thinking this would be fewer of something that wasn't really that useful, in the public perception. But what seems to be emerging is a pattern whereby there will be fewer NDP politicians as the result of the redistribution of boundaries. That seems to be the target.

I looked at a map put out by the OSSTF and it basically showed with colour coding which ridings are held by which party, and here in the north we do seem to have quite strong representation from the NDP in terms of people we've elected for government.

1310

To cut to the chase — I guess I'd better do that — for an MPP representing a riding the size of Algoma, which, as you know, is in size very much like the distance between Windsor and Quebec City, to drive that distance from end to end would take eight or nine hours, that kind of thing, driving rather briskly. For the size of that riding to be enlarged is really something I'd like to take issue with.

Certainly an MPP from an area like Algoma doesn't have time to duplicate efforts. Consensus locally would seem to be that for many years, I think it's 21 years, the public can't get better value for its money. The energy expended in providing representation to an area like Algoma is awesome. The expenditure of energy creates an example of public service which people locally cannot help but admire. People of whatever political affiliation, in normal day-to-day dialogue, do drop their banners once in a while and admit that there's a tremendous job of servicing going on by our local MPPs.

Tony Martin, the local MPP, is very fortunate to have a smaller riding, but again, he's a going concern. His recent re-election in the face of a mood which wouldn't suggest that this was likely, that the NDP had a strong base to refer to, speaks well for the quality of his representation.

Anyway, as a number of people have probably reminded you, the United Nations last year made a point of saying that Canada was the admirable place to live; they talked in terms of quality of life. There was a strong impression put to us through the media that Canada was seen internationally as a wonderful place to be, a wonderful place in terms of productivity, the economy, quality of life, that kind of thing. That's what I understood from the message I was getting from the media.

A lot of things have been changing in the last year, the underpinnings, the strength of our institutions. When we talk in terms of health care, in terms of education, in terms of social programs needed by particular parts of our community, these all do seem to me and to labour council, from my interaction with labour council locally, to be a destructive series of assaults on the quality of our life, on the productivity of our workforce, and really on the hope and the morale which had been a feature of living in

Canada, living in Ontario. This is not meant to be adversarial. I'm just expressing my perplexity that we can go, in one year, through this kind of legislation, which in my opinion is designed to save money, but the cost seems to be unacceptable to the public and certainly to people where I work and where I gather to try to understand the events of the day; that's labour council, or my union specifically.

I'd like to comment on six issues. I'm sure other people have touched on the same issues, but I'm not commenting on these because anybody has asked me to do so. I want to make some remarks because I feel it needs to be said.

For example, this particular hearing that we're in, as I understand, would not be taking place except for the strong representations of the very small group of NDP MPPs who are presently in provincial government. It seems to me a fundamental right of citizens to proper representation that when a major change in law, a major change in the way we do business politically, takes place, there should be some kind of hearings. I do not understand for a moment why these hearings do not take place across the province, except I guess that the voices from northern Ontario were louder this time, were more clear, or perhaps they were able to communicate that we feel a need here to be heard.

A second issue: In general, the proposal for fewer politicians, in so far as it changes boundaries and affects access, when you're talking about larger ridings of the population at large to a representative, the effect is to decrease community representation and participation.

I find this odd, because in every large workplace in Ontario that I've come across there's an increasing demand or request or a need is seen for there to be participation, for the full energy of the workforce. The initiative of each individual participant in a workplace is being asked of people in the average workplace. When you get to the bigger picture, it suddenly emerges that somehow or other there's supposed to be a logic to the idea that we can do with fewer representatives. Particularly with this influx of new ideas and new energy from workplaces where the workers, the participants in the workplace, are being asked to put their minds to the issues and to say their piece and to get involved, I really have trouble understanding why less representation would make sense.

You've heard the argument before, I know, but if you look at the Yukon, for example, there's one federal MP from there. If you were to say, "Let's just go for one federal riding per one provincial riding, and we'll just match it up like that," there would then be a Legislative Assembly in the Yukon which would consist of one person. That is stretching it, I know, around here; we're not talking that kind of extreme measure until you look at the political arrangement. Then of course the NDP does seem to be suffering a personal attack here and the people of northern Ontario do seem to be under assault for their political convictions, for their free and democratic choice in elections. That's pretty well all I had to say about that.

My prime point is that I consider that this piece of legislation is a fundamental blow at what I understand to be democracy. I have this feeling, a sense, a belief, that this is a step towards wiping out democracy. Certainly it

will diminish democracy as I understand it. I would define democracy as a system of government for the whole population through elected representation. I feel this system that we have evolved over many times — the last redistribution of boundaries I understand was proudly presented to the public through public hearings by a then Conservative government, Mr Bill Davis. This process, as I understand it, is quite different.

1320

In terms of local and regional issues that are more specific to this area, representation specifically to the north will be cut. We will lose members, and the thought did occur to me that this might be an attempt to reduce the visibility of the north, to make the north be quiet, to hush up the north. But I'm sure there must be other, more complicated issues that you might explain to me in the response part of this session.

The Acting Chair: You have three minutes left.

Mr Greaves: In the whole 20-minute session? I didn't do that deliberately. My timepiece seems to be keeping political time.

Local issues: Basically in the north my impression is that the Tories are cutting northern Ontario's representation to reduce their visibility in the media and to reduce their influence on improvements of quality in the government. The provincial programs, as you well know, which include health care — hospitals and clinics and district health centres — education, school boards, transportation, highways, road maintenance, social services, these kinds of programs put a workload on provincial MPPs which isn't there for federal MPs. This is why there has to be the higher level of contact between provincial MPPs and the public.

Basically, as a sort of final thrust here, the service that government offers across the board, federally and provincially, is being cut. The government is being downsized. Service to a community like ours is less. The onus then falls on the constituency office of the MPP. That's what's there, and there is an increased demand for those services. I can't see that reducing members is going to be an effective way of meeting this increased need.

Thank you. I apologize for taking that much time.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Greaves, for coming in today and making your views known, and we're right at the end of the 20 minutes.

ANDY MARTENS

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Mr Martens.

Mr Sergio: Any relation to Tony Martin?

Mr Andy Martens: No, no.

The Acting Chair: Mr Martens, you have 20 minutes to utilize as you see fit.

Mr Martens: Thank you for allowing me this afternoon to address the committee on Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. I'd like to thank Lou Turco, the president of the Progressive Conservative riding association of Sault Ste Marie, for providing me with this opportunity. I think it's great experience to be able to do this kind of thing. This afternoon I will be speaking in favour of this bill. I believe that it's a stepping stone, that Mike Harris is really showing that leadership begins at the top.

This is a move I welcome, as this brings Ontario in line with the new federal riding boundaries, a move which will save the people of Ontario \$11 million by coordinating election efforts with Elections Canada.

This bill has been criticized by residents of northern Ontario who say it will leave the north underrepresented. I disagree. In fact, the Fewer Politicians Act will actually give northern Ontario two more ridings than it would normally have under a pure representation by population system.

This indeed is a bold move, but it will not only affect the Liberals and NDP but the government members as well. The opposition must have thought Mike Harris was bluffing when this promise was documented in the Common Sense Revolution and mentioned again in the 1995 election campaign. How can Mike Harris and members of the government expect to do more with less if leadership by example isn't shown at the top, namely, Queen's Park? I believe that, as Mike Harris says, the province should demand the same value for its money from its politicians that it asks of civil servants, doctors and others.

Some arguments against this bill are that it may be harder for people to get through to their MPPs. I don't buy that. Fax machines, cellular phones and the technology is here, as well as the information highway with computers, and it is here for us to use to receive and to obtain information.

Mike Harris promised the voters in the 1995 election that when he was elected Premier he would cut the size and cost of the Legislature. This bill I feel is another example that this Premier has brought honesty back into politics by doing exactly what he said he would do.

All I seem to hear these days is northern Ontario members constantly complaining how large their ridings will be after this bill is passed. I have no other conclusions to draw, but I figure the federal MPs must be superhuman politicians. In my opinion, nobody in the 1990s job market is irreplaceable. I believe that under this bill, the reduction of seats is fair. Northern Ontario will lose five seats; Metro Toronto will lose eight; eastern Ontario, six; western Ontario, six; and from Niagara to the suburbs of Toronto, two seats.

As I mentioned earlier, Bill 81 will do a number of key things. It will save the government \$11 million, it will show leadership and honesty in politics, and it cuts government costs, which other parties in power over the last 10 years have failed to do.

I agree with Mike Harris when he spoke to the Legislature on October 1: "Everyone must and will share in our common struggle as a province and a people to balance our books once and for all. This step...means that restraint will be shouldered from the highest levels of Queen's Park on down. This is only right and it's only fair. It is leadership by example."

Bill 81, in my opinion, will improve the quality of candidates that the people of Ontario will have to choose from in the next election.

I agree with the Premier and other Ontarians that government at every level has become too big, too cumbersome, too costly and too unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of taxpayers. We have accumulated extra

politicians, administrators and civil servants over a long period of time. This, as the Premier addressed the House, was an era in which the answer to each of society's problems seemed to be to add more programs, spend more money, build more buildings and put people behind desks. Creating more bureaucracy and spending money have not, in my opinion, solved the problems of Ontario.

1330

Now I'd like to bring out some facts to back up what I just finished mentioning, what other people are saying about the Fewer Politicians Act.

"Occasionally, one of our many governments does the right thing. In early October, Harris followed through on his election pledge to reduce the number of MPPs sitting in the Ontario Legislature." That is from the Ontario Taxpayers Federation, Let's Talk Taxes, October 18, 1996.

"Since assuming office, Harris has done more than any Ontario Premier before him in providing 'leadership by example,' first by scrapping the MPPs' gold-plated pension plan and tax-free allowances and now by reducing the number of MPPs." That's again the Ontario Taxpayers Federation, Let's Talk Taxes, October 18, 1996.

"We all must hang tough in favour of this useful change because what we need in Canada is fewer politicians, not more, and what we have just got is only a good start.

"What we need is many more trucks driving off into the sunset with the unneeded chairs of mayors, councillors, trustees and a bloat of bureaucrats. We are suffocating under politicians." That was from a Toronto Sun editorial of October 4, 1996.

"The Conservative government is right to reduce the number of seats in the provincial Legislature (from 130 to 103) and to make the boundaries coterminous" — similar, identical — "with federal ridings.... This is one Tory move that needs to be applauded, not attacked." This was from a Liberal newspaper, I might add, a Toronto Star editorial of October 7, 1996.

"There is a move afoot by the opposition and some media to portray this as a heinous Tory plot to do away with the other two parties by rigging the riding boundaries.

"In fact, what the Tories are doing is restoring proportional representation to the province....

"The new boundaries were set by a federal commission and are based, quite simply, not on who's going to gain seats but on one of the fundamental principles of democracy — that each person's vote counts for more or less the same as another person's in the same jurisdiction." That was from Christina Blizzard, a columnist of the Toronto Sun, October 2, 1996.

Next I'd like to get into some other facts to illustrate just what this government has done compared to what's happened in the last 10 years in the issues and area of jobs and growth.

The Liberal and NDP failures: The NDP policies discouraged business investment, to cost Ontario countless thousands of jobs and stifled growth and opportunity. The impact on you was a discouraging future for our children, no opportunity and no choice.

Meanwhile Mike Harris: initiatives to create a positive job climate, including a cut in personal income tax rates,

restoring the balance in labour laws and freezing hydro rates. The benefit of that was a future of opportunity you can look forward to, and already there have been 100,000 new jobs created.

Under the NDP and the Liberals, the unemployment rate went from 6.3% in 1990 to 9.6% in 1994. There were 66,000 fewer people working. The impact on the voter was simple: difficult to find and keep a secure job and plan for the future.

Since June 1995, 100,000 new net jobs have been created in the province of Ontario. Despite a setback last September, Ontario gained 45,000 new jobs in the third quarter, July to September. This is the strongest quarterly growth in over two years, and it's a simple benefit: jobs, hope, growth and opportunity.

Next I'd like to deal with the biggest pet peeve I have as an individual of Sault Ste Marie, and that's the deficit. Under the NDP and Liberal governments in the last 10 years, the budgetary deficit in 1994-95 was \$10.3 billion.

As a personal aside, how can that kind of figure offer any future? I have two young children, six and four. This has to be one of the most important factors of why I'm involved in this whole process, to make a difference.

The deficit was \$10.3 billion for 1994-95, up from \$3 billion in 1990-91. The NDP never met a deficit target set in any of their budgets during their five-year mandate, and the Liberals claimed falsely that they had a balanced budget in 1990-91.

The impact on me and on everybody in this room was a government that stifled the economy instead of stimulating it; programs became unaffordable.

As of June 30, the deficit for 1996-97 was projected to be \$8.178 billion, down \$2 million from the budgetary plan released in May.

Now you have the Mike Harris government: The Provincial Auditor has confirmed that the deficit for 1995-96 was \$8.72 billion, \$372 million less than was estimated in May.

The benefit is simple: Government is doing better for less, setting priorities and creating a climate for investment confidence.

The Acting Chair: Two minutes, Mr Martens.

Mr Martens: Just to wrap up quickly, it's simple, the jobs speak for themselves: April 1996, Magna International, 1,000 new jobs; September 12, 1996, the Bank of Montreal, 200 new jobs, and the list goes on and on and on; September 17, 1996, London Life Insurance, another 100 new jobs; September 20, 1996, 1,000 new jobs at American Express.

In conclusion, I would like to say on a personal note that I've lived up here in the north for six years, and I think I'm qualified to speak on the north. Yes, I have spent three quarters of my life living in southern Ontario, but the issues — there are many, but as I mentioned before, the main reason I'm here and I want to make a difference in this process is because I have children who are six years old and four years old. Thank God for a person like Mike Harris, who brings honesty back into politics and is doing what he said.

On another personal note, just to wrap up, I moved up here in 1990 with the Ontario Lottery Corp. Media reports as of this morning indicate that privatization could lose

some jobs for the lottery corporation, but I'm not going to jump off the bandwagon for Mike Harris. I have a lot at stake because both my wife and I work for the lottery corporation, and I still think Mike Harris is doing the right thing for the future of this province.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Martens, for appearing before the committee today.

1340

LOU TURCO

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant will be Lou Turco. Since Frank Klein came in this morning, we'll just move one person up. Mr Turco, you have 20 minutes in which to make your views known.

Mr Lou Turco: I appreciate the opportunity to be present here today to speak on the Fewer Politicians Act. My name is Louis Domenic Turco, although most people in our community know me as Lou Turco. I am proud to say that I'm from the north and even prouder to say that I am from the city of Sault Ste Marie.

I have been a resident of Sault Ste Marie since 1956. As a child, I remember arriving in North America from Italy — and I'm sure Mr Sergio can relate to this story, as can Mr Martens. I came from Italy with my mother, brother and sister, landing in New York City by boat, of all things.

To say it was a culture shock would be an understatement. Arriving in a strange land not being to able to speak or understand a new language was indeed a frightening experience. I can vividly recall being herded as a group into what I now know was Grand Central Station and having to wait until it was time to board a train to our promised land. It wasn't until many long hours later and train changes that I recall looking out my window and glancing at the massive landscape and miles and miles of trees and little sign of life.

I also recall stopping in what I learned later in life to be the town of Sudbury and people leaving the train car we were in. It was yet another frightening experience, not being able to ask questions and not being able to understand. The only words we could utter to the conductor were "Salt Ste Marie," at which time he nodded and reaffirmed that we were on the right train, much to our relief.

It was several hours later that we arrived in "Salt Ste Marie," where my father who had been in Canada for two years was anxiously awaiting for our arrival. His 1949 Pontiac looked like a Cadillac to us. It was just like yesterday.

Looking back now with fond memories, I remember our longing for our homeland and waiting to go back to Italy before we even stepped off the train. We were wondering what we were doing in this big country with its forests, huge lakes and sparsely populated areas.

Well, here it is, November 1996, and it is an honour to be living in northern Ontario. The family has grown a bit from a handful of names in the phone book in 1956 to 40 Turcos listed to date. My family and relatives have lived, worked and played in northern Ontario since arriving from the old country, and all of them have and are giving back to this great land.

Both my mother and father worked at the lumber mill in Sault Ste Marie on Peoples Road, known as Rodiss Veneer for many, many years.

And do you recall that brother and sister who came with me from Italy? Well, my brother Mario is currently a superintendent with the board of education and my sister is a French teacher with the board. Her husband is a high school principal for the Central Algoma Board of Education and my brother's wife is also a teacher in the adult education program. I also have a younger brother born in Canada in 1958 — he was our Christmas present — and he is a college professor. You wonder what happened to me.

What's my point? I just wanted you to know that all my family members and relations and myself are very appreciative and honoured to make this country and, in particular, northern Ontario our home.

I come from a broadcasting career, and the industry has been very good to me from my early years to my adult years, although the word "restructuring" has not escaped the broadcasting industry either, which made me part of the process, as well as causing my wife and I personal hardships and sacrifice in the last few years. But as Dr Schuller says in one of the most popular books of all time, "Tough times never last, but tough people do," and "Everything happens for a reason."

When I thought, what else could happen in my life, along came the election of 1995. I have always been interested in politics, although other than putting my name up for school patrol captain and a mock election in grade 8, which I lost, and the French club presidency in high school, I have never really considered other political opportunities even though I was honoured to have been asked to have my name stand for a position with the separate school board of trustees and have even been approached to run for mayor, of all things. It was a quick "Thank you, but no thanks." I loved what I was doing very much, and I still do.

One of my favourite books is *The Celestine Prophecy*. In late 1994 I began to read with interest this James Redfield classic. It's a great book about experiencing life and one which I could not put down. I highly recommend it. What really got me interested in this book were the comments on the inside cover, which state, in the form of a question: "Are three decades of interest in modern physics, ecology, mystical religion and interpersonal psychology finally synthesizing into a new spiritual common sense? Can it become the dominant paradigm of the next century and the new millennium?" I'm not here to promote the book — it did well without my help — but it had a profound effect on some of the decisions I have made in the last few years.

In January 1995 I was asked if I would be interested in having my name stand at the upcoming nomination meeting to run as a candidate in the soon-to-be-called provincial election. If that question had been asked a few years earlier, I would have said, "No, but thank you for asking anyway." But after several discussions with my wife, I made a decision to accept this honour that was bestowed upon me and took up the challenge, as many of us in this room have.

Before the nomination meeting, we made a decision to learn everything there was to know about the publicized

document the Common Sense Revolution. I wanted to know everything about the plans and objectives and election promises that were outlined in the CSR. We called Mr Harris's office in North Bay and set up a meeting with him to learn more about the CSR. It was on my way to North Bay with my wife that I can recall her reading to me from cover to cover the Common Sense Revolution. The same thing happened on our return trip to Sault Ste Marie, another five hours. Some of my family members find it hard to believe to this day that I never said a word for 10 hours. I let my wife do the talking; I still do.

It was just after this trip that both of us made the decision to go with it and pursue the opportunity to represent our city and province. I was convinced that the Common Sense Revolution in effect would work. Over the past few years, people all over Ontario and, yes, northern Ontario have sent strong messages to their politicians, going back even into the mid-1980s, that government as we know it today isn't working any more. This was certainly confirmed in the election of 1990, as we all know, in the dramatic defeat of the government in power; it was sent in the referendum campaign in 1992 and once again in the past federal election.

I have had the opportunity, as did current government members, to talk to people in malls, coffee shops, social gatherings, living rooms, hockey arenas. People gave us the same message: Government has to change the way it runs the province.

All of us in this room, including yours truly as well as many Saultites, business people and industry, to name but a few, have had to make many personal changes not only in the workplace but also in the home. It's time government makes the same changes we have all experienced in our personal lives. We're not talking about tinkering, about incremental changes or about short-term solutions.

Mr Sergio, we have an old Italian saying that goes, "Il pesce puzza del capo": The fish smells from the head, or, loosely translated, everything starts at the top. Government has to lead by example by starting at the top. Voters are saying there are too many politicians. Less government was one of the promises I campaigned on. This Bill 81 is not something that was just thought up recently. I and all of my fellow candidates around the province were fully aware that a Mike Harris government would keep this well-documented promise.

1350

If I may refer to page 8 of the Common Sense Revolution, "Finding the Savings" — by the way, I happen to have a few extra copies here today of the Common Sense Revolution if anybody needs a copy. You have yours? I quote from the "Finding the Savings" category:

"Consensus among Ontarians is that there is plenty of fat to be cut, and many ways that government can reduce its spending without affecting priority services.

"Here are the savings we've found so far....

"Fewer Politicians

"You have told us we have too many politicians. Under this plan, we will reduce the number of MPPs, from 130 to 99, simply by using the same boundaries we use to elect federal MPs. We will enter into discussions with the federal government to ensure the new boundaries are fair.

"Not only does each politician draw a salary and an expense allowance, but we must also pay for their office staff at Queen's Park and in their riding. Cutting the number of MPPs by 24% will set an example of cost cutting to be followed by all levels of government and all departments and ministries.

"As well, we will end the sweet deals politicians have created for themselves. Under this plan, MPPs' pensions will be abolished and replaced with an RRSP contribution program similar to those used by other professionals in Ontario. The tax-free benefits paid to politicians will also be abolished. They will be paid a straight salary, just like ordinary Ontarians.

"These measures will save Ontario taxpayers another \$1.1 million." Actually, the total savings will be, as you heard today, \$11 million.

This government is now moving forward on another key promise in the Common Sense Revolution by cutting the number of politicians. The new 103 ridings, a cut of more than 20%, will be the same ones, as promised, as the ones used to elect federal MPs, and the change will be in place for the next provincial election.

The Fewer Politicians Act proves once again that this government is not afraid to make tough decisions, including ones which will impact directly on the current members of the Legislature. Ontarians believe there are too many politicians. Two years ago our party promised in the Common Sense Revolution to cut the number of MPPs to match the number of MPs we send to Ottawa. I campaigned on this issue. All our candidates campaigned on this issue. This government is following through on its promise.

This government is leading by example. I referred to the fact that the government has already abolished MPPs' pensions and ended tax-free allowances. Reducing the number of MPPs by 20% will set an example of cost cutting for other levels of government, as well as agencies and ministries, to follow. This reduction will serve as an example for our municipal politicians.

Just recently, the city of Sault Ste Marie sent out a survey seeking the residents' opinions on how we can find savings in Sault Ste Marie. Of the surveys received, some Sault Ste Marie voters even suggested and wrote in that we have too many politicians municipally and that there should be a reduction.

The Fewer Politicians Act will save money. After the next election there will be 27 fewer MPPs. That means taxpayers like you and I will not have to pay for their salaries, expenses and staff.

Cooperation with Elections Canada could also result in substantial savings in areas of election staffing, enumeration, mapping and administration. Finally, adopting the boundaries which were recently set out by the federal commission means that Ontario will save the cost of holding its own redistribution commission.

This government recognizes the uniqueness of northern Ontario, and thus the Fewer Politicians Act appreciates and recognizes that northern Ontario is very unique. While a vote should be worth as much in one riding as it is in another, there is still a need for special provision for the north to compensate for our immense size and dispersed population. As I alluded to earlier, northern Ontario

ridings will have a smaller population. Under this plan, northern Ontario has been allotted two more ridings than it would have under a pure representation-by-population system.

Although Liberal leader Lyn McLeod has said she believes Ontario needs more politicians at Queen's Park than it has in Ottawa, I personally agree with Mr Harris that the province can be served quite effectively with 103 women and men in the Legislature.

I have been asked a few questions about the redistribution plan around the city, and I would like to share some of these questions and responses. One of the questions is, "Why is your party doing this to the north when it's underrepresented?" My response is that I can only say that no region in Ontario will go underrepresented. Representation is based on population, but even so, the north will continue to have ridings with smaller populations even after the changes are made.

Another: "The opposition parties say some of the new boundaries create ridings in the north that are so large they cannot be adequately serviced and that provincial politicians already have more work than their federal counterparts. Algoma is one of those examples." I'm sorry, but I personally cannot buy the argument, with all due respect, from the Liberals or the NDP. They both support more government, more spending, higher taxes, more debt, more deficit. How is it that the federal MPs, all of whom are Liberals, can handle their ridings? If the provincial Liberals and the NDP are unable to handle their ridings under the new plan, I can give you a list of provincial Tories lining up to do the job, and include me in that list.

I've heard that some of your own members are angry that they will be losing their ridings under the new redistribution plan. Every sitting member on the government side was and is aware that once the Mike Harris government was in place at Queen's Park, the Fewer Politicians Act would be introduced. These members campaigned on less government in the Common Sense Revolution and won on that campaign.

Here's one of the favourite questions that I hear fairly often: "Isn't this just politics, reducing the number of MPPs in northern areas where the Tories are not at their strongest at this time?" Well, Premier Harris didn't set the boundaries, federal Liberal leader Jean Chr tien did, and I doubt very much that Mr Chr tien wants to help Ontario's Tory government in any way.

I would like to make the point that I made earlier, especially growing up in my Italian household, Mr Sergio: We have learned to do better with less, and now it's the turn of all the politicians to live by the same standards that we are expecting all Ontarians to live by. It only makes common sense. Other provinces appear to be following suit. I refer to the last Newfoundland budget where the Liberal government made a commitment to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Assembly.

I have been following this subject closely on the provincial legislative channel, in newspapers and magazines, and on the radio and TV news. It is good to see that even the Toronto Star — yes, the Toronto Star — has this to say in the October 7 editorial: "The Conservative

government is right to reduce the number of seats in the provincial Legislature (from 130 to 103) and to make the boundaries coterminous with the federal ridings.... This is one Tory move that needs to be applauded, not attacked."

The Acting Chair: You have three minutes left, Mr Turco.

Mr Turco: The Toronto Sun's Christina Blizzard said in an October 2 column: "There is a move afoot by the opposition and some media to portray this as a heinous Tory plot to do away with the other two parties by rigging the riding boundaries."

"In fact what the Tories are doing is restoring proportional representation to the province."

I'm not going to read the whole article but it also says: "The new boundaries were set by a federal commission and are based, quite simply, not on who's going to gain seats, but on one of the fundamental principles of democracy — that each person's vote counts for more or less the same as another person's in the same jurisdiction."

I must admit that I searched through the newspaper archives for some quotes applauding the Fewer Politicians Act from our local MPPs but, sad to say, I wasn't very successful. But I would like to quote the October 4 Toronto Sun editorial which sums up my personal feelings on this bill:

"But we all must hang tough in favour of this useful change because what we need in Canada is fewer politicians, not more, and what we have just got is only a good start."

"What we need is many more trucks driving off into the sunset with the unneeded chairs of mayors, councilors, trustees and a bloat of bureaucrats."

To summarize, although I was not personally successful on June 8, 1995, it was gratifying to see that common sense is alive and well in this province. For me, the experience of being able to serve my city and province was a very positive one which I will not soon forget. After being called a broadcaster for over 30 years, it was quite an overnight transformation to that of a politician. And yes, all politicians are not bad, as we have some fine outstanding women and men on both sides of the House, many of whom I have had the pleasure of meeting.

During the stint as a campaigner, I heard repeatedly that we are the most governed people in the world. Adding more politicians, creating more bureaucracy and spending more money has not solved our problems as a province. Rather, these costs have added to our debt load, and if they are allowed to continue to mount, the debt will be passed on to our children and grandchildren.

I am very pleased and support fully that the government has taken another step to reduce the size and cost of government and to do better for less. Believe me when I say that I know from experience what it's like to do a lot more for a lot less. I hope I have given you a different slant on the subject as a past candidate and a northerner, and I'm confident that whatever the outcome in the next provincial election, we will all be fairly and properly represented at Queen's Park.

I want to leave you with a short story that some of you may have heard before. It relates to a father and his young son. The boy was restless and the father wanted to watch the Saturday afternoon football game with some degree of

peace and quiet. In order to occupy the youngster, he took a map of the world and tore it up into several pieces, thinking this would keep the boy busy for some time. Much to his surprise, the young lad returned in a relatively short period with the task accomplished. The dad asked how he had been able to do it so quickly. The boy replied: "Well, it was easy, Dad. You see, on the back of the map there was a photograph of a person. I got the person right and that made the world right."

I would paraphrase this story just a bit: If all of us, you and I and many others, concern ourselves with and work towards good government and service to our fellow man, then we stand a much better chance of getting the world right.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Turco, for presenting your views to the committee today.

Mr Wildman: Mr Chair, could I ask our researcher to give us some information? I have a question I need answered. It arises out of a couple of presentations that have been made today. I'll use Mr Turco's as an example. He said the provincial government would enter into discussions with the federal government on the new boundaries to make certain they are fair.

I would like to get some clarification of what discussions took place between the provincial and federal governments on that score, particularly since a number of presenters, including Mr Turco, said at the same time that Premier Harris didn't set the boundaries, that federal Liberal leader Jean Chrétien did. Those two statements seem a little bit contradictory. I would like to get some clarification.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Wildman. So noted and so instructed to our researcher.

Mr Michael Brown: Mr Chair, further information: I was wondering if the researcher could give us the number of federal seats in Newfoundland and information regarding the number of seats that Legislature will now be.

Mr Glenn: After redistribution.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes, after redistribution.

Mr Wildman: Are they mirrored in the federal boundaries so that there are only seven members in the Newfoundland Legislature?

Mr Glenn: I believe it's a reduction by five, but I'll get the information.

The Acting Chair: So noted.

1400

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS'
FEDERATION, SAULT STE MARIE
SAULT STE MARIE
WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Ms Gayle Manley of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation and the Sault Ste Marie Women Teachers' Association. Ms Manley, would you like to proceed, and please introduce your cohort.

Ms Gayle Manley: Thank you very much for allowing us to present at this hearing. I'd like to introduce Michael Patriquin, who is the president of the local Sault Ste Marie Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. I'm the president of the Sault Ste Marie Women Teachers' Federation.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak at this hearing and present our views on the redistribution plan as outlined in Bill 81, briefly coined as the Fewer Politicians Act. As teachers we know the importance of consultation and meeting the needs of all those concerned in any issue.

In the title of Bill 81 there's an underlying premise that less is better, in particular politicians. This feeds into, in my mind, a Reform Party tenet that less government is better. However, less does not mean better. Fewer means less access, less accountability and a loss of democracy for many citizens in Ontario. In northern Ontario we do not feel that fewer politicians are better. Our representatives have served us well. Northern Ontario needs to maintain all present representatives in order to maintain our voice in the government of Ontario.

At this point I'd like to address some of the history, as I understand it, around redistribution. Tradition has been that after each census the province has looked at the redistribution of riding boundaries. An independent commission was usually set up to look at this. It's interesting that originally the present government was prepared to bypass tradition and public consultation by not holding hearings on this particular piece of legislation.

To allow public input into the running of government is an important part of democracy and should not happen only every four or five years at election time. We appreciate, therefore, that today's hearing has been allowed to take place. We are, however, concerned that this government is determined to go through with changes no matter what feedback is given to the contrary. This has been our experience to date on a number of educational issues.

In 1983 the terms of reference set by the Legislature in the process to examine redistribution guaranteed the north 15 seats. In 1992 a private member's bill, introduced by a Conservative member concerned about rural representation, was passed proposing to limit the geographic area of constituencies in Ontario to reflect the "varying conditions, circumstances and requirements regarding representation as between rural and electoral districts." This 1992 resolution was introduced by Mr Noble Villeneuve, the present Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The concern to maintain a rural and northern voice in the Ontario Legislature was important in the past and is just as vital today. Is this issue no longer important to the Honourable Mr Villeneuve?

Why are federal ridings even being considered as a model for provincial ridings? The job description of a federal MP is quite different, as all of you who are present know, from that of a provincial MPP. The concerns of a provincial MPP are oriented to service constituents within a local concept. The Sault Ste Marie representative must look after a variety of areas, including health care, education, social services, transportation, consumer relations, all issues that impact on daily life in the Sault. While the federal MP deals with some of the same issues as a provincial MPP, the scope is more general in nature.

If one makes comparisons with other provinces, one can easily see that provinces like Saskatchewan, with a similar population to that of northern Ontario, or Newfoundland, with half the population of northern Ontario, have more seats than northern Ontario even though the area covered is considerably smaller.

Geography must be a factor in looking at the redistribution of ridings. In the proposed riding of Algoma-Manitoulin the distance from Manitoulin Island to Manitowadge in the north end is approximately 480 kilometres. From Timmins to Peawanuck in the riding of Timmins-James Bay is 760 kilometres. For our electoral representatives to service areas of this size, it would demand more time than is allotted for work in the riding weekly. A southern Ontario MPP has the advantage of being able to live close to home, meet the daily requirements of work at the Legislature, attend meetings in his or her riding at relatively little cost during the week and have a life at home. This is not the reality for MPPs in the north. To increase the size of ridings would increase their workload and make it harder for northern constituents to contact the member they have elected on issues that affect their communities and families.

Transportation in the north offers a number of challenges to its citizens. It's quite different from southern Ontario. Access to all parts of northern Ontario may require a variety of modes of transportation, including flying into remote areas. Cutbacks in highway snow cleanup make travel in the winter more risky for our MPPs. Cutbacks in the airline business often mean lack of access in and out of certain northern cities on weekends. In northern Ontario we enjoy the uniqueness of our geography. However, this very uniqueness will put our MPPs at a disadvantage when they must address the needs of constituents over the vast distances proposed by these new boundaries.

As educators we are aware of the importance of being accountable for our programming to our parents, boards of education, the ministry, the public, and of course to our students. This was certainly the intention of setting up the College of Teachers, although one elementary representative for all northern Ontario on the governing council of the College of Teachers parallels the loss of northern representation in Bill 81. Accountability is of great concern to the present government, as it should be, as they claim they are fulfilling the promises of the Common Sense Revolution. However, it is clear that increasing the size of ridings and decreasing the number of elected representatives will lessen the ability of government to be accountable to the people of Ontario. It is more likely to increase problems rather than make government more efficient.

We teach our students that democracy comes from the Greek words meaning "government by the people." Every student knows the importance of having the right to vote and a say in the governance of Ontario. "Democracy may be simply defined as the people in action," said Henry Wise Wood, a leader in the farm movement of the 1920s and 1930s. By decreasing the number of electoral ridings in Ontario, the voices of the people are denied. The citizens of northern Ontario, with its diversity and vast area, will not be adequately represented. Democracy will be denied. Oligarchy, rule by a few, will be the norm.

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This is an equity issue not easily understood by a government which repeals laws in place to enact employment equity and affirmative action. In this Ontario everyone must have a voice, not just the industrialized,

highly populated areas. In the organization of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario we have addressed the need to represent the concerns of all areas equitably through regional representation. Northern Ontario, in our federation, is split into two regions, and of the six regions in Ontario there are the same number of directors from each region on the executive of this organization of 41,000 teachers. Equitable representation must also be a part of the provincial Legislature.

Where is the evidence that would suggest it is a wise decision to cut the number of MPPs at this time? Most indications suggest that the quality of representation experienced by the electorate will be greatly reduced as the role of the MPPs continually increases with federal downloading. Is there any evidence to suggest that geography, demographics and regionalism not be taken into account along with representation by population, as has been done in the past, when determining boundaries?

To summarize, the present government needs to reconsider the reduction of the number of electoral ridings as proposed in Bill 81 for these reasons, and I reiterate:

(1) The use of federal ridings is inappropriate for the duties of provincial MPPs.

(2) Geography must be taken into account.

(3) Constituents will find it more difficult to access their elected representative.

(4) Past practice should be honoured.

(5) Accountability will be lost.

(6) Equity and fairness should be considered for rural and northern Ontario.

(7) Democracy will be denied if the proposed legislation is passed.

Mr Martin: Thank you very much. That was indeed a fulsome presentation with lots of really interesting issues raised. It points to my major concern in this whole exercise, which is the process we're going through to get where we want to go. I don't think anybody would disagree that redistribution from time to time, considering all the things you have laid out here, is an essential and healthy part of evaluating and making assessment on whether we're being properly represented.

They do this in a two-month period of time, rushing it through so that people don't have the time, as some folks have said today and in other places, to prepare a good presentation and enter into real dialogue about it and not have a hands-off commission look at this as well in the context of Ontario, as opposed to picking this federally designated conglomeration to serve us.

You raised one issue that was raised this morning that hadn't been raised in the two days I've been here that I think is an important one, and some may not see it. It's the question of how we use our politicians, the fact of politicians having a life, and my feeling that if a politician doesn't have a life, he or she is not a healthy politician.

Right now just in this jurisdiction I don't have the distance to go and I sometimes wonder if I have a life. My wife wonders if I care about her and my kids because I'm not home very often. I can only imagine the stress on people like Mike and Bud who have the distances to travel that they do. We're putting a strain on politicians. You can say, "Well, if you don't want to do it, then give it to somebody else who does." That's just an easy answer

to a very complex situation. I think we're better served if we have politicians who have balance in their life and can serve in that way. I would just like your comment on that.

Ms Manley: I know in my own way I'm a bit of a politician too in the job I do, more so in the last two years perhaps than I ever thought this job would entail. It's critical that the balance is there. I certainly don't cover the distances you and Bud do, but it's vital that you have that balance in your life with a variety of things, so you need your family. There's nothing better than to go home and have your daughter say, "I'm really glad you're home." That makes you go on for the next day. I am sure all the members who are sitting in here probably have the same sense when they go home on the weekends of how nice it is to do so.

Mr Martin: I also think you make better decisions as a politician when you're healthy and rested and have the time to do the kind of research you need in dealing with some of these very complicated issues that come at us. Under Bill 81, in my mind, we will be stretched to the point where that won't be the case any more, even though as it is now sometimes it isn't.

Ms Manley: I noticed just from listening to former presentations — I haven't been here that long, but there seems to be this perception by some presenters that the protest is wanting more politicians. That really isn't the case. Maintaining what we have now certainly in northern Ontario is what we would like. I don't know whether my cohort here wants to address your point, Mr Martin, on that.

Mr Michael Patriquin: No, but I'd just like to take this opportunity, if you don't mind, to ask Mr Hastings — and it's not with any lack of respect for you, sir — I'm just wondering about the process here. After this hearing is heard or your series of hearings is gone through, what's the next step for this group of MPPs?

The Acting Chair: The committee will be going to Timmins tomorrow. When the material is accumulated, it'll be analysed by the various caucuses, I suppose, and amendments will be introduced.

Mr Patriquin: There is a certain feeling out there, and I am sure you must be aware of it, that these hearings are a sham, that the government's mind is already made up, that this thing is going through, that this is probably a waste of time on everybody's behalf. I don't mean to hurt anybody's feelings by saying what I'm saying.

It's sad to see government making the decisions they're making, and it's not just in this area. It's in reference to the Paroian report as well, where time after time at hearings people, good citizens of Ontario, take their time to make it here, to make presentations and, weeks after the presentations are made or a month after the presentations are made, the reports are written, decisions are made and there doesn't seem to be a lot of input that has been realized as a result of these many, many presentations that have been made in northern Ontario as well as southern Ontario. Can you comment on that?

The Acting Chair: We are into questions from members of the committee and rather than my responding to your concern, I thought I was being more than generous in allowing you to continue on this vein. We'll get you a response, and I am sure that members of the caucuses can

respond to your outline of what you presented to us. What I would like to do is to continue with the questions, because Ms Manley did not indicate that she wanted you to speak, except in terms of Mr Martin's queries, and Mr Martin has now had his three minutes.

Mr Patriquin: My name is on the front of the presentation, sir.

The Acting Chair: I know it is.

Mr Wildman: The proof is in the pudding. If there are any amendments to the bill, you'll see that the input had some effect. If there aren't, then you'll see, you'll know.

Mr Young: Whose time is it, Mr Chairman?

The Acting Chair: Well, let me tell you. The NDP have had their four minutes. Mr Hardeman.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you for your presentation. Just a couple of questions: We've heard quite a number of presentations yesterday and today concerning the distances in the north and the impact of an MPP having to travel a lot more. Part of your presentation deals with the quality of life for the MPP in the north in comparison to an MPP in southern Ontario.

Many presenters have told me as a member from southern Ontario, "I don't understand the north," and that's why we have this problem. Yet I find it interesting when you suggest that if you are a member in southern Ontario, in fact you can do your work at Queen's Park and you can attend events in the evening in your riding and you can spend your time at home with your family. I want to tell you that may be true for people in the GTA, but the problem of distances and being away from one's home, again I have to assume that some people in northern Ontario don't understand all of southern Ontario. We in rural Ontario have those same problems as it relates to travel.

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Mr Wildman: Ernie, that's why we're trying to defend the rural ridings that are being eliminated.

Mr Hardeman: I just wanted to point that out. Recognizing that our electoral system is based on some form or as closely as we can to representation by population and recognizing that the proposal in Bill 81 makes some consideration for the fact that northern Ontario is sparsely populated — they allow it to vary on a percentage basis — would you have any idea or could you give us your comments on what you think would be a fair distribution?

Accepting that I think all three parties have said that the status quo isn't necessarily right, we do need to look at change in representation and stick to some form of representation by population, the people in the densely populated areas feel they're not being fairly represented because of their population. Do you have any idea what percentage of variance should be allowed for northern Ontario?

Ms Manley: I wouldn't say that I personally had studied very much of that. I know what happens in my own organization where we have a board of directors that has an equitable representation. Then when it comes to annual meetings, we use the rep by pop there to move our motions or our business.

I think you have to take into consideration some of the problems. Obviously, if you're from a rural riding, you

must have a sense too that even though you have small numbers, your distance — it's almost like you have to have a waiting factor in some form, and to be honest, I am not quite sure how you would go about it. As I said, with the short notice that we've had to put this together, I haven't been able to pursue that.

Mr Hardeman: The other comment you made was related to northern Ontario as a block or as a district or as an area of the province requires to be fairly represented. When the members come from the north and go to Queen's Park and they sit there to deal with the issues of the north, does it require more people to represent per capita? The question really is, once you're at Queen's Park, does the geographic part of your riding have an impact on the policy decisions you would be making as an MPP?

Ms Manley: My perception of what an MPP does is that they have to make sure they represent their riding, so that in fact they have to know what the people in their riding believe. There's where the geography will come in, whether Tony or Bud or Mr Brown has to work his way around his riding to discuss with his constituents their opinions on that.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for coming. I appreciate this very much. I think it was a thoughtful discussion of the issue. H.L. Mencken once said that for every complex issue, there's a simple but wrong solution. I think that's what we're seeing here. Ontario has grown in between censuses 20%, 25%, maybe even 30%. I don't have the exact number, but it's a huge population increase in this province from one census to the next. Obviously, that was going to necessitate a pretty vast redistribution of the ridings.

Our problem was we thought it should be a made-in-Ontario solution because the federal government, in the context of Canada, makes these decisions. If you followed that debate, you would know it went through two different governments, having the bill blocked in the Senate for a while by the Conservative majority in the Senate, and it wasn't pretty. The idea that this thing is perfect would not be shared by anyone.

The government seems to suppose that that solution is perfect, and so I've been arguing — if that's what you believe, why wouldn't you believe then that Elections Canada would run the election better than Elections Ontario? That would probably save you some money because you would have an experienced group of people, you could subcontract to them, it would be a way to do it. Then why wouldn't you have the elections on the same day? That would save you money, that would make sense. Why wouldn't you elect your judges and your dogcatchers and your municipal council and your school board people, if any of those are left, on the same day?

They have taken part of the federal boundaries and said: "Okay, that's it. We're not going to deal with the rest of this." If it's about efficiencies, there's a whole long way to go if you go down this path. Seeing as we're the only province in Confederation that seems to believe you need the same number of MPPs or MLAs or MHAs, whatever, we are the only ones who believe that, why would it work in Ontario? If this wasn't so serious for the constituents, because none of us here — we're only

temporary occupants of those chairs down there. They belong to the people we represent.

I really don't have a question other than to say, what's your view? Do you agree?

Ms Manley: Obviously, from the tone of the presentation you would know that, in fact, I would agree. I'll let my partner here have a chance.

Mr Patriquin: I think you can simplify things up to a certain point, and after that there's a breaking point. Like you say, you can do this on the same day, you can have the whole scenario that you were talking about, but I think there reaches a point at which things get to be very ineffective. I'm just wondering, in cutting the MPPs in the north, whether that is what's happening. You can only stretch it so far.

It seems to me, if you look at the map of southern Ontario and then you turn it over and look at the map of northern Ontario, people have the mistaken idea that they're both the same size when a lot of northern Ontario is on that front page. It's a vast area, and I'm just wondering if, in fact, that whole thing is taken into consideration. How can we have those people represent an area that just cannot be represented fairly? With all due respect to the gentlemen who are in those ridings, it wouldn't matter who was in those ridings. The job most likely couldn't be done very well.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Manley and Mr Patriquin, for appearing before us today and presenting your views on this subject.

ALGOMA DISTRICT MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is a representative of the Algoma District Municipal Association, Mrs Lucy Konkin.

Mrs Lucy Konkin: Thank you for the opportunity to express our comments and concerns on Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts.

The vast area of Algoma is comprised of 25 municipalities, and the distance from one end to the other can be compared to the distance from Windsor to Quebec City. Reducing the number of ridings from 15 to 10 will make it difficult for northerners to keep in touch with their MPPs on such issues as health care, education, jobs and transportation. It now takes the MPP eight hours to travel the riding from one end to the other, and travel time would be doubled with the proposed boundary realignment.

The city of Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay, Timmins, North Bay and Sudbury would have the same representation, but 90% of the land in Ontario would be represented by five MPPs. Is this democracy? The redistribution of boundaries would produce a situation where northern constituents are not effectively represented. It would be impossible for MPPs to have contact with all communities in their constituencies and therefore would not be able to adequately represent them.

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This government has made a commitment to have provincial electoral boundaries coincide with federal

boundaries; however, the federal government is increasing the number of seats in Ontario because they accept the fact that some areas of the province are growing and need representation. In Saskatchewan, the federal government, in redistributing the ridings, agreed that the two enormous northern ridings would not be subjected to the same rule — one person one vote — as the rest of the province. Can the provincial government also acknowledge that there are certain situations where we cannot apply the population factor?

It is so important that constituents have accessibility to their provincial representative since many matters under provincial jurisdiction deal directly within their community. It is even more important that northern constituents have a good representation in the provincial Legislature.

I strongly urge you to consider factors other than population figures when proposing rural and northern ridings, including historical, cultural, economic, transportation and communication patterns. Please consider the specific geographic conditions in Algoma, the problems of size, the climate, the distance between communities and the limited access constituents have to their member of Parliament.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Konkin. We have 15 minutes for questions, five to each. We start with the government.

Mr Stewart: Thank you for your presentation. I just want to clarify one thing before I ask a question. We've been hearing today and yesterday and two weeks ago that the government wasn't listening. In my former life as a municipal councillor, and indeed three years as being warden of a county, I did a lot of presentations to previous governments, and I can tell you that Bill 163 and Bill 40 and a few other ones were not changed because of my input or because of anybody else's input. They were taken out and they were put into effect.

I would like to say that this summer when people were on holidays or not working, whatever might be, I was in Thunder Bay three times, Sault Ste Marie twice, Dryden as of now once, North Bay twice, Timmins and Kenora once, Toronto, Sudbury, Windsor, Chatham, Peterborough, Kingston, London, Milton, Kitchener, Niagara Falls, Sarnia and Hamilton on hearings, and that was representing five different bills. Do you not feel that's taking things on to the road to get input from people?

Mrs Konkin: That's true.

Mr Stewart: I'm not trying to be confrontational. I just want it to be on record that I believe we are taking it out and listening to the people. Of course, I just had a call a little while ago from my constituency office and it kind of reminded me of the gentleman talking about the review on Bill 100. The reporter says, "Well, what's it going to be?" I said, "If I was to answer that, first of all, it would be extremely presumptuous because at the moment it happens to be under review, with consultation." I guess that's one of the concerns I have.

The other one on your presentation, which I appreciated, I said earlier this morning that I used to travel in the north country so I kind of know the distances. What I said to the particular person is, we've got great distances up here, but are we going to travel to the farthest point today and then are we going to go back tomorrow to that same

farthest point, and then the next day go over here? I think what we're saying is, if this were to happen, MPPs, whether it be in the north, the south, the east or west, are going to have to find ways of doing business better, much the same as we've had to do in small business in many other areas.

Do you think, first of all, if people want to talk to their MPPs, they should only talk to MPPs?

Mrs Konkin: Yes.

Mr Stewart: I believe they should talk to staff. I've got a great bunch and they do a heck of a job for me.

Also, in your mind, if this were to happen, do you not think it could be worked well to still give the people, for those who wish, the opportunity to be involved?

Mrs Konkin: I've worked in a municipality for 21 years and I've seen where members of Parliament have met with the constituents over the years. I think people are accustomed to the fact of speaking to their member of Parliament. They don't want any substitutes. If you had staff coming to try to do business, carry the message forward to an MPP, I don't think people would really appreciate it. That's my opinion.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): Thank you for your presentation. There have been a number of concerns addressed today, or at least brought to our attention, about the geographic area, and that's one of the major concerns. You've listed a number of them here that you think have to be addressed, rather than just representation by population.

We've had the question asked a number of times, and there is an allowance to set the boundaries not just by population but allowing for some other factors to be part of that determination. Do you have a figure in mind that would allow for those things that you've mentioned in your presentation, and how we could address them and, as well, incorporate them? Do you have a differential, sort of a figure that you feel would adequately address that? This is a public opportunity and we're looking for direction. I know the question's been asked before, but we haven't really had, as I've seen today, clear direction come back from the public. I wonder if you could help us.

Mrs Konkin: I think that's a question that probably needs some study and input from the members who are really working in the north, the members of Parliament. They know what population they can handle. It's not something I can answer. The existing ridings and the number of members of Parliament seem to have been working. What we need to change it, I'm really not sure I can answer that.

Mr Michael Brown: Welcome to the committee. I think maybe to be helpful, not so much to myself or to Mr Wildman but perhaps to the government side, you might describe the communities that are represented in the Algoma District Municipal Association. There's a reasonable variance in size and obviously a great distance between many of them, ranging from Wawa back this way.

Mrs Konkin: Municipalities are represented from Hornepayne, White River in the north; Michipicoten; Dubreuilville; Sault Ste Marie; Bruce Mines; Echo Bay, which is a township of MacDonald; Iron Bridge; the township of the North Shore; Blind River — just off the

top of my head. There are 25 municipalities anyway. That is a sampling.

Mr Michael Brown: In my present constituency, the present constituency of Algoma-Manitoulin, there are places like the township of Shedden and the township of the North Shore and Elliot Lake, but we are a relatively minor portion of the Algoma district. We're just kind of on the edge. There's also another municipal association, the LaCloche Foothills Municipal Association, that represents a number of municipalities around the Espanola area, and then of course there's the Manitoulin. So essentially there are three different municipal associations in the area, quite a distance from each other.

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The thing I think should be noted that the government members seem to be missing here is that by and large these are relatively small municipalities with a lot of distance between them that have things in common but also have things that are quite unique about their situations.

I think about Elliot Lake, for example. When I was first elected, I worked very hard in Elliot Lake to understand the place because I came from a rural area, and this is a mining town and mining towns have cultures all their own. Working at it, I came to understand what a mining town was about. Espanola is a forestry town. Wawa is a bit of both. But most of the municipalities are either kind of bedroom communities of others or they have an agricultural or rural base, tourist-type. It is a remarkably diverse set of municipalities and of people.

I guess my real question is, I would have thought there would have been, as had always been since the days of Leslie Frost, an election commission that would come up with a made-in-Ontario solution based on the rules that Ontario has for conducting elections. Would that be the position of the district association, that there should be a commission to redraw the boundaries? You're not saying we shouldn't do anything about it at all?

Mrs Konkin: That's right. I believe that any boundaries sometimes require adjustment over a period of time as the population increases. However, I don't believe that northern Ontario should have such a drastic reduction in MPs, and therefore the boundaries should be adjusted or realigned with the number of MPs not reduced. You know? That is a lot, five MPPs.

Mr Michael Brown: If one was to look at northern Ontario as a province, we would have four to five times as many MPPs as we have MPs, if you follow the formula used in every other province.

Mrs Konkin: That's right.

Mr Michael Brown: No one's suggesting that we should have 40 or 50 people, but it seemed to me the number of 15 was pretty reasonable in terms of what goes on, because the five ridings we are losing are the rural ridings. It is the Algoma and Algoma-Manitoulin district that is being put all together. It is Rainy River-Kenora, but it isn't the Sault. The difference here for that the people in the Sault will be negligible.

Mr Wildman: Lucy, I want to thank you very much for coming to the committee on behalf of the Algoma District Municipal Association, particularly since I understand you've been suffering from the flu, so I appreciate your taking the time.

As I understand it, at the last meeting of the municipal association they passed a resolution requesting that this be reviewed and expressing concern about the reduction of MPPs. Isn't it fair to say that the members of the municipal association, as Mr Brown has said, represent very diverse communities, some francophone, some anglophone, and mining, forestry, tourism, farming, many different types of communities, and also they come from many different political stripes? I think, frankly, we all know each other pretty well in the north and we know who's an independent, who supports various political parties, and yet the majority on the municipal association, representing all different political persuasions, voted for this resolution and suggested that you should come to make the presentation.

I'm quite encouraged by the questions from Mr Stewart and Mr Danford, really, particularly Mr Stewart's comment that this is not cut and dried and that a decision has not been final, that we may see some amendments to this legislation and we may in fact see some changes in the boundaries set forth. Up to now, the Conservatives have generally said: "Well, this is up to the federal government. The federal government has decided the boundaries and nothing's going to change." I'm really happy to hear that we may be able as a committee to recommend to the Legislature, on the basis of the input we've got, that there will be changes. I'm really pleased that the Conservatives have said that.

In answer to Mr Danford's comment about what should be proposed, I think to be frank it's a little bit difficult for you, as a member of the public and representing the municipality, to answer that question. I would just say to Mr Danford and to the committee that this question has already been answered in 1975 by the Camp commission appointed by Premier Davis's government. The Camp commission studied this very intricately and extensively and came forward with proposals about how you deal with population, how you deal with community of interests and how you deal with geography, and they came up with a formula that has been followed since 1975 on the two or three redistributions that have taken place since then.

It's a very extensive study that was based on hearings across the province and criteria that were set. It was a commission that had Mr Camp representing the Conservative Party and two other representatives, one from the federal NDP and one from the Liberal Party. It was a tripartite commission that indeed answered the very question you asked Ms Konkin.

If perhaps our researcher could provide the final report of the Camp commission to the committee, then we could begin to do the kind of thing Mr Stewart has suggested is possible: We can actually start to design the boundaries in a way that takes into account representation by population on a formula that also takes into account geography. I'm really encouraged; I'm glad you came to the committee and we got that from the Conservative members, that we're actually going to begin to do some real work here and design boundaries that will properly represent the areas in southern Ontario that are growing in population, taking into account the needs that you've put forward of northern Ontario in terms of our wide geography.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Konkin, for coming in today.

Mr Danford: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I appreciate Mr Wildman giving an explanation of how things have been done in the past, but I think it was important that we heard from the public whom we were listening for today. That was my point, Mr Wildman. Like I said, I appreciate your comments, but I think the most important point is that we hear from the public here today. That's what's important.

Mr Wildman: I agree.

Mr Glenn: I'd just like to bring the committee's attention to my response to Mr Wildman's request for information on the scope and nature of discussions between the federal government and the province of Ontario on the redistribution documents. One copy has been distributed to each caucus. If you have any questions, you can get in touch with me.

Mr Wildman: The upshot of this is that there in fact were no real discussions between the provincial government and the federal government about this, other than a request for the map.

Mr Glenn: That's correct.

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TERRY ROSS

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Terry Ross. Mr Ross, you have 20 minutes to make your views known on this subject.

Mr Terry Ross: I'd like to thank you and the committee members for this opportunity to address the proposed changes to the Representation Act.

I will be brief. I would welcome an exchange of views with the members of the committee on the ideas that I'm putting forward. I don't have a written paper, but I think you'll be able to follow what I have to say. It's fairly simple and fairly straightforward.

The short title of this proposed legislation is the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996. This is interesting and I believe it's fairly revealing. It would seem that we've reached a point in time where the public holds politicians in such disrepute that any scheme to reduce their number would be received with enthusiasm: thunderous applause from the grass roots of Ontario to this proposal.

I must acknowledge, as a long observer of politics and as a teacher of political science for the last quarter of a century, that I have noticed a pervasive air of cynicism about politics and politicians. Something quite fundamental has happened, I believe, in western democracies over the last years, indeed decades. The political has become debased.

I want you to consider this fact and stand it against the democratic theory we all espouse, or at least say we do. Democracy carries an implicit endorsement of the political sphere. We invite or even require citizens to participate in the exercise of authority and power: the requirement, for example, in Australia, where voting is obligatory, not voluntary. We proclaim this participation to be an important activity.

I would ask you to consider, for example, the attention and resources we devote to elections, the effort to interest people in the campaign and to get them out to vote. All of you at the table know how much energy goes into this far better than I do.

I think what we are saying is that everyone has a responsibility to be politically active, at least at a minimum level, to select our rulers. I would suggest that in this practice the residue of an old idea remains: Politics is a worthwhile human activity.

As you know, ancient Athens is said to be the cradle of democracy. Aristotle, poet and politician, citizen of Athens, believed that politics was a noble activity. To be a politician was to have an honourable profession. In contrast, commerce, the making of money, Aristotle argued, was only fit for slaves.

It's not much of an exaggeration to say that in our contemporary democracies, the values have been turned around. Making and spending money is celebrated. Politicians and political activity are despised and rejected. How many high school counsellors would advise politics as a career choice?

The shift which has occurred is to be found in the language we use. Think of the human members who make up our community. In the past, we most frequently spoke of "citizens," the value of citizenship and the role citizens played in society and state.

Now the preferred term is "consumer." We are consumers in the marketplace of goods and services. This includes goods and services in the public sector: health, education, culture etc. Someone requiring medical attention is no longer a patient but a consumer of health care. We have elevated the role of consumer to be pre-eminent, at the expense of citizen. The valued relationship which existed between citizen and state and which consisted of a set of reciprocal rights and responsibilities has gone out of fashion.

Aristotle thought humans to be essentially political animals. Today our human essence and our value is defined by our role as a consumer. This I would argue is a passive role. Citizen is an active role which carries responsibilities, including the responsibility of participating in the political process. When you consider that less than 50% of the eligible electorate voted in this year's presidential elections, you may appreciate how far this value of participation has eroded and how great the distance we have travelled between the democracy of ancient Greece and contemporary America.

So, you ask, what does this all have to do with this bill? To promote fewer politicians, representatives of this province, which this bill does, is to reinforce current trends and attitudes that politics has no value and the popular perception that politicians are an unnecessary expense on the public purse and should be got rid of. This final conclusion may be somewhat disconcerting to the members present. I would expect that all of you believe in your worth and the value you are playing in promoting the public interest. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Ross. We have approximately 15 minutes, five minutes to each caucus.

Mr Young: I really appreciated your comments on citizenship and I agree with most of what you've said. I just took some notes here while we've been sitting here this afternoon on the number of places a person in our society in Ontario can go to express their political views, to seek exchange of political views and to ask for help with political issues, either individually or as a group,

because I think it's incumbent upon us as citizens to take responsibility to do that.

We've heard comments here that we're an over-governed people. I'm one of those people who agree with that. Let me show you why. If you have a concern with your local hospital, you can go to a hospital board. With the schools you can go to the school board. You can go to a federal MP or, what happens in really 95% of the cases, you go to the MP's staff. You can go to a provincial MPP or the MPP's office staff. You can go to a mayor or reeve. You can go to a local councillor. For many people you have a union; we've had unions here presenting on behalf of their members. You can go direct to government bureaucracies. Then there is a series of agencies, boards and commissions that you can go to to express your views: the Ombudsman, human rights — too many to name.

I think it's incumbent upon individuals to pick up the mantle and to make us have better government by taking more of that responsibility upon themselves. I would ask you to please comment on how individuals can contribute more to their society by improving their own citizenship and not expecting government members to do everything for them.

Mr Ross: I wouldn't have any disagreement with your proposal that people within the community take an increased responsibility in their own affairs. I think this is very important in the day that we live in. It's really a question of how they do that and what kind of climate. I mean a climate in the sense of the ideas that are present that encourages people to participate within their own community. In order to do that, it's necessary for people to believe that their involvement will make a difference. I think that's where we move from political apathy to what we in the trade call political efficacy. Efficacy means that in fact you will make a difference.

I assume that all of you around the table ran for office because you thought you could make a difference. Now, how do you encourage other people to feel like yourselves? I think the way you do that is by the process of empowerment. People have to feel that they do have the opportunity to take some control over their own lives, but they're currently facing such a bewildering array of uncertainty in a world that is very rapidly transforming. It's exceedingly difficult, it seems to me, for any group of people, young or old, to know how they can insert themselves into society, into the political process, into their own communities and really make a difference, and globally —

Mr Young: I'd like to comment on that because I think one of the reasons people are confused is they find Confederation confusing. It is confusing, because if you have an education issue you want to go to your provincial MPP or the school board, but the federal government, with social transfers, funds it, so people are confused.

I think you'll find most people — maybe not in the north of Ontario, but certainly in the south — are unsure what riding they live in. One of the things this bill will do is, if you live in the riding of Oakville federally, you will live in the riding of Oakville provincially. It will make it much easier for you to take that first step, pick up the telephone, call and say, "I'm unhappy with this." Can you comment on that?

Mr Ross: I'm not sure that's the case.

Mr Young: I'm sure it is.

Mr Ross: If you take a look at people who are facing an election, federal or provincial, in the Metropolitan Toronto ridings, it's often very difficult for them to know (a) who their member currently is and (b) who's running. Part of the reason, of course, is that ridings don't have the same kind of immediate identity. There's not a community newspaper in many cases. Their boundaries are not clearly demarcated as they are, I would say, in the more rural and northern regions or in the more peripheral parts of Canada.

Mr Young: We had someone here this morning who said that we don't have freedom of expression in Ontario.

Mr Gilchrist: Very briefly, I wonder if you would agree, or what your comment would be, that part of the reason the public has become very cynical is, quite frankly, because politicians didn't do what they said they were going to do after they were elected; and that one of the things we can do to bring back that empowerment, to remove the cynicism, to restore some faith in politicians, is to actually keep our promises. In that regard, given that since May 1994, 13 months before the election, we promised that, if elected, we would copy the boundaries of the federal ridings, would you not agree with us that if we're going to have that mark of integrity, we are honour-bound to follow through with that promise?

1500

Mr Ross: I wouldn't first of all agree with the promises that were contained in the Common Sense Revolution. I have to, however, acknowledge that the electorate of Ontario did endorse the Conservative Party to form the government. Of course, there's a complicated way in which we elect governments, as you well know.

Whether reducing the number of members in Parliament is the best means to encourage participation, to engage citizens more actively in their community, I'm not sure.

Mr Gilchrist: But leaving aside what the promise was, do you not agree that it's incumbent on us to keep our promises?

Mr Ross: To keep your promises I think is a good idea, but if a promise is to be kept to change the boundaries of the Ontario ridings to be congruent with the federal ridings, and that is a promise that you are insisting you keep, then I would ask why you are holding these hearings.

Mr Gilchrist: Because we were looking for people to make suggestions, if there were substantive reasons given for technical alterations or something that the federal commission might not have considered. But every day in these hearings, to people who have come forward and said, "This bill is wrong," we've said, "Fine, tell us what change is right." The other side, they've been nodding their heads all day. They believe in redistribution, they say. They say our minds are made up. Mr Wildman, just to the last presenter, said: "We believe in redistribution but we think there should be a commission. Of course the end result should be we still have 15." So you tell me whose mind is made up.

The bottom line is that we've made this commitment. We said we will make sure that the test was fairness. We

got a copy of the report. The report proves that they did hold those federal hearings fairly, and we have no other qualms about why we shouldn't keep our promise. If there were technical reasons or suggestions on how we could better find savings through cooperating with the federal electoral commission, those are the sort of things we want to hear. How can we make this better? Don't just tell us that the status quo is okay, because the voters last year said it wasn't okay.

Mr Sergio: Mr Ross, thank you for coming today. Are you a professor of political science, sir?

Mr Ross: Yes.

Mr Sergio: Do you see this issue as more of a political issue, if you will, rather than a real, realistic issue?

Mr Ross: Could you amplify? How do you mean, is it a political issue as opposed to what kind of issue? It seems to me that everything in politics is political.

Mr Sergio: Well, not really. If the Conservatives were not caught with this particular promise having been made in their Common Sense Revolution, do you really think, as a professor of political science, that today they would have come to the people of Ontario and say, "We are going to redistribute the ridings in Ontario"?

Mr Ross: I think so. Given the kind of views this government has and the members on the Conservative side, the proposal to reduce the number of politicians has a lot of currency. You will find favour with a lot of people by saying, "Look, we're going to get rid of a lot of those politicians." It's like getting rid of bureaucrats. It's the same kind of constellation of attitudes that exists right now.

As I say, it's very important to understand that the political has been debased. What we now have at this moment in our history is that we have exalted the private and we have diminished the public, and I think this government is keen on continuing that. I therefore would argue that the reduction in politicians, which is what this legislation says, apart from the technical side of determining how the boundaries will be drawn — take a look at what the short title of this act is. That is meaningful.

Mr Sergio: In a way you're answering my question. That is why I posed that question. So it is politically good to tell the people out there? Somebody else before you said it's an issue that appeals to the public.

Mr Ross: Yes, I think so.

Mr Sergio: They've been playing to the public. Now, if you, the public, were given the facts — and I'm not totally against redistribution, because it doesn't affect me. It's a matter of money, it's a matter of common sense, it's a matter of delivering services and good, solid representation — at a price, of course. Then we have to say, if they want us to go along with the federal lines, are we going to be compensated the same way the federal members are going to be compensated, or are we going to be seen as less capable than the federal members? Are we going to have the same resources? Are we going to have the same pension benefits? Are we going to have the same salaries? Are we going to have the same staff? No. You see? No. That's not the point.

If you, as Joe Public, were given all the facts about, "What does this mean to us, cutting 27 MPPs?" — the pros, the cons, the benefits, the assets, the negative points.

You don't have that. We don't have that. They didn't give us anything. They didn't give you anything. They didn't give the public anything. They said, "This is what we promised; this is what we're going to do." If the public were given a set of pros and cons, do you really think you would go along? I'm speaking now mostly for the north. Do you think you would go along with their decision to go ahead and do it?

Mr Ross: I think people want to be able to express their concerns and their needs in the forums where the decisions are being taken.

Mr Sergio: With knowledge.

Mr Ross: With knowledge. Currently, the institutions we have are old institutions. If you think of the institution to which you belong, Parliament goes back several hundred years. Political parties go back to the 19th century. You may want to ask yourself, are these kinds of institutions, which were created for a very different time and a very different age, appropriate for now? I think that would be a really interesting discussion to have. But that's not the issue at hand. The issue is to reduce the number of politicians and to redraw the electoral boundaries of Ontario. One perhaps is a technical question; I would advance the argument that the second is a highly political question, and you cannot escape it.

1510

Mr Martin: I think you've hit the nail right on the head here today. This piece of work is about shifting power. It's about taking power away from the people through a legislative process and turning it over so subtly more and more over to an executive body that is driven, in this instance, by the marketplace and corporate considerations.

You took us through a bit of a history lesson today. I just want to do a very brief understanding as well and then maybe have some comment from you. It seems to me that we've always had tension between various groups, and it's about power, about who makes decisions that affect all of us and who wins and who loses in those decisions. We had at one point in our history the feudal lords fighting with the peasants. Then we had the Industrial Revolution, where the industrialists began to fight with the feudal lords over who would be in control. Then we had the rise of organized labour in conflict with the industrialists.

Over the last, I believe, 10, 15, 20, 30 years, we've come up with I think a more intelligent and inclusive approach to how we do business. There was a time in our history when government was done by all of the people. It was a smaller jurisdiction. All the people arrived and argued with each other and, ultimately, at the end of the day, somehow decided on some things they would do. We've become a bit more sophisticated. We elect people to do that on behalf of all of the people.

It seems this piece of work is about a shift from democratically elected legislative processes to more executive processes. It's been pointed out that the budget of the Premier's office, for example, has tripled in the last year at the same time as we're downsizing the money and the power and the influence and the numbers on the legislative side of the ledger. My hunch is that this is all driven by a belief that the marketplace decides best for all

of us what's good for us. Is that a correct interpretation, do you think?

Mr Ross: If one considers the ideological climate of today, and we have to — what are the ideas, what are the principal values and the weights we attach to those today? — I don't think there's any question that we are very much enamoured of the marketplace and the market as the major mechanism by which to distribute goods and services and, ultimately, power.

That's why I make the distinction between consumer and citizen. It seems to me that a citizen means you have a right to participate by virtue of your residence in a particular community. Whether you have \$1 or \$20,000, your value is in your residence and the fact that you are a citizen of this community, and you have as much a right to participate, at the same level of importance, as your neighbour who may be very wealthy. A consumer — the relationship is fundamentally different. If you have purchasing power, that means dollars in your pocket. If you don't have purchasing power, you are not a consumer, therefore, in our day, if you're not a consumer, you really don't have much value at all.

Mr Martin: One more quick question. I have about 30 seconds. On a different subject, does it make any sense for Ontario to base its electoral boundaries on commitments made by the federal government to, for example, PEI and the Yukon? Does that make any sense to you?

Mr Ross: To redraw the boundaries of Ontario consistent with the federal boundaries because of commitments that the feds have made to PEI? If you take a look at PEI, they have 27 seats provincially, four seats federally, right? If they were to redraw the boundaries of PEI consistent with the federal boundaries, you'd end up with a House of four, and I don't think the folks in PEI — I'm a former resident of Charlottetown and I know the island fairly well; I know the Legislative Assembly — would go for it.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Ross, for your balanced, interesting and intriguing viewpoints today.

VYRN PETERSON

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Vyrn Peterson. Mr Peterson, you have 20 minutes to march along. Please proceed.

Mr Vyrn Peterson: Mr Chairman, members of the assembly, my remarks will be relatively brief. I have a bit of a cold, and maybe that's a blessing for all of us.

As very much a federalist, I have to believe that the federal commission, when they went across this country and looked at how the ridings should be distributed, employed as many elements of fairness as possible. I'm not sure it was entirely successful, however, in that there are certainly valid arguments to be made in northern Ontario that representatives from here do not get from one end of the riding to the other as easily as in other areas of the country.

The statistic on Prince Edward Island was interesting, when you compare the number of federal seats to the number of provincial seats. It may be that there's room to take another look at northern Ontario.

But the overriding principle here — I've heard some very good comments, but unfortunately I didn't get here very early — is one of restoring the faith of the general

public in the politicians to be looking after their interests. I think one of the largest steps taken towards that end is the downsizing of the Legislature, because the public can see that and understand that a serious cut is being made within what many people believe to be the politicians' own realm.

I don't know if this assembly can produce some other technical reasons for making some specific changes in northern Ontario that allow the promise to be kept where it's possible. I hope the deliberations are leading in that direction. If it is possible, it should be changed; if it's not, it is of overriding importance that people be able to understand the message that when a leader says the boundaries will match the federal boundaries, then that is exactly what happens. Some of us should perhaps have been involved when the federal hearings were taking place. We missed that opportunity. I don't know if any of these messages will get back to them, but unfortunately we're a shade late right now.

By far the overwhelming principle, in my mind, is that the public get the idea, even from these deliberations, that the discussions are not centred around an individual protecting their turf. This is a method of representation that we're talking about here. I have worked with some of these northern gentlemen, all three of them on this side, and I know they're above that, but I think they have some good points about the difficulties in administering to a northern Ontario riding through sheer distance.

It's easy to say that in a time of technological change, yes, you can do things with live video and you can do things electronically a lot better. In northern Ontario in the smaller communities, we don't have that opportunity. I come from Blind River, not too far from here, which is about 4,000, and it's only in the last couple of years that we could get the other buttons on our phone to work. There are certainly other communities out there that you can't access by means that may be employed elsewhere in this nation.

I'm glad the assembly found time to come to northern Ontario. As I said, I wish some of us had taken a more participatory role when the federal hearings were going on.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Peterson. We have 15 minutes. We'll start with the Liberals.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm certainly happy to see my good friend Vyrn here from Blind River. I think what you're saying is that the government is on the hook, that the Premier made a promise prior to the election, and the Premier wants to keep his promise because he wants to be seen to be keeping his word, but perhaps that promise was a little bit simplistic, particularly as it relates to rural areas and northern rural areas in particular, and that maybe somebody over on that side should be thinking about what can be done to fulfil the promise but still take into consideration the unique nature of "provincial" concerns in what will be this new mega-riding: currently the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin and the riding you're in, Algoma, and Chapleau and the district of Thunder Bay, a portion of it.

1520

I've worked with you. I've worked with your councillors. I know you've worked with your own members.

Sometimes both of us have been at the same meeting. We have not always succeeded in being successful, I don't think, for the people of Blind River, but it hasn't been bad. Access has been — at least the access was always there.

Mr Peterson: The access has been good.

Mr Michael Brown: Yes. I'd dig myself into a bigger hole, right?

I suppose there are suggestions. The thing the government forgets about the federal boundaries is that they're drawn in the context of Canada, not the context of Ontario. Therefore, rural distribution in our part of the world is affected by giving four seats to Prince Edward Island because the British North America Act guaranteed that they would have no fewer members of Parliament than they had senators. That was the deal. There are deals with the Northwest Territories, there are deals with the Yukon, and I think they're appropriate deals; I'm not saying they're wrong. But when you take the federal redistribution into account, they have to understand they've got four more rural seats here than maybe they should. That impacts on the way things are happening in Ontario.

If we could find a way, and that's what I hear you're saying, for the government to satisfy its "election promise," that might be to perhaps harmonize the electoral lists, harmonize the polls within ridings so that they are the same polls. We could perhaps have different ridings but all the efficiencies that could come from electoral list sharing and all the efficiencies that would come from polls could occur.

The promise is technically broken by the fact that they said they were going to go to 99 ridings. They're already wrong, because the federal redistribution came to 103, so the promise contradicted itself. I'm looking for an out for you here, Steve. And I'm talking and trying to protect your cold, Vyrn.

Am I characterizing your views correctly, in terms of what I'm saying? You don't think this is a terribly workable solution, but the Premier is on the hook, so let's find a way to make the Premier look good and get a reasonable solution also? I'm all in favour of that.

Mr Peterson: That sounds good. Well said.

Mr Wildman: Thank you very much, Vyrn, for coming. I appreciate your coming when you're not feeling so great. For the benefit of other members of the committee, Vyrn and I have worked with each other for many years. Also, Vyrn ran against me for the Conservative Party in one election campaign, and it was a very good campaign and a fairly fought one. I think it's useful to have you before the committee, Mayor Peterson, because in your municipal experience and also your experience as a candidate, you know something about the distances we have in northern Ontario.

I understand your presentation, and I agree with you that we were not as active as we should have been on the federal boundaries commission. I remember when it first came out, the first proposal for the changes in Algoma was that the riding was going to go up to James Bay. It was going to take a swath of northeastern Ontario up east of Timmins up along the Quebec border and just take in what is now Timiskaming and everything up to James

Bay. Everybody, of all political persuasions as well as Independents, said, "This doesn't make any sense." It was as a result of that, as Mr Gilchrist said earlier, that there were discussion to say, "This doesn't make sense," that Manitoulin Island didn't have any community of interest with Moosonee. So there was a decision to redraw that.

I think every one of us in the north breathed a sigh of relief when the decision was made: "Okay, we're not going to have that kind of riding." Then when the final thing came out, we found they'd gone the other way, up to Manitouwadge. Frankly, a lot of us were a little taken by surprise. I think many of us thought they might decide to combine Algoma-Manitoulin and Algoma, but we didn't expect them to put Chappleau in the riding, nor did we expect that Manitouwadge would be added to the federal riding. There were those concerns, but I think Brent St Denis — and I'm certainly not speaking for Brent St Denis, our MP — breathed a sigh of relief when he found out he wasn't going to be representing Moosonee and everything in between. We were a little bit slow to react to the redrawn boundaries.

Mr Peterson: I would have to agree with that one.

Mr Wildman: I'm not asking you to argue with the promise made in the Common Sense Revolution, honestly I'm not, but my question is this: Do you think that decisions around electoral boundaries in Ontario should be determined by constitutional guarantees of four members for PEI in the House of Commons or an agreement that there should be three members from the far north, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in total, or that there should be 75 members from Quebec in the House of Commons, that those factors, which have to be taken into account in determining how we draw boundaries for the members of Parliament's constituencies, should be the factors that determine how many seats we have in the provincial Legislature at Queen's Park?

Mr Peterson: That's a very good question. If you're going to have the benefits of any cost reduction of having one enumeration system and one riding name, you certainly would have to take those factors into consideration in drawing the federal boundaries. I don't think they should be the only factors. Again we come back to the fact that there were opportunities to make presentations to earlier panels, and we slipped up and simply didn't do it.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Wildman. Mayor Peterson, I didn't know you were mayor, or are. We'd want to honour you for being so.

Mr Peterson: I'm not here as mayor.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I just wanted to follow up on some of that questioning about not making presentations when the non-partisan commission went around looking at the boundaries and to read you a few of the items that this come directly from the submission from that commission.

It says, "The commission took into account submissions presented during its public hearings to follow transportation routes more closely in its changes to Nickel Belt, Algoma and Timiskaming."

I'm just going to read a few of them: "All substantially below the provincial quota." "To follow recommendations of municipalities in this area." They're talking about Manitouwadge and the population down to the Pukaskwa

National Park. Then they're also talking about the Timiskaming-French River area: "For this reason, while considering transportation links and communities of interest, most of the Timiskaming area is kept together and population is added to the south and to the north" etc.

In fact, from what I've been able to ascertain here, the presentations made to those committees were heard, and because of what they heard they adjusted the boundaries.

We've heard a lot of talk about eroding democracy and all that. Mr Martin is one who has presented in the House several times the definition of democracy, and part of that definition is, "With each citizen sharing equally in political privilege and duty." If you believe in democracy, you believe in each citizen having equal representation. Even with all that and allowing for differences in geography and distance, with these new boundaries the north would still have more politicians than, say, the south, if you go by representation.

One of the things we heard from the previous presenter also was that there's a great deal of cynicism about politics and politicians. My belief is that the reason is because, as everyone knows, politicians say a lot of things during campaigns and then when they're elected often-times they turn around and do other things. This government does not. This government campaigned on a promise to change the boundaries to conform to the federal ridings.

Having said all of that, you didn't make a presentation, and the time has come when we're fulfilling an election promise. What would you suggest the government do?

1530

Mr Peterson: I think the overriding one, and maybe I didn't state it as bluntly as some people may be used to, is that the public get the impression that the promise from politicians will be kept, because we don't always have that. That's not a slur on anyone, because circumstances do change and we're all pretty much aware of that. But I am not sure that if a good enough technical reason that was left out of the federal system were discovered at this point, it wouldn't give the room to fulfil the promise of still downsizing the government and ensuring that the riding size physically was within personal physical abilities to cover. When you talk 12 hours by vehicle from one end to the other, a whole day is gone and you don't make any stops in between.

Mrs Ross: I have only been elected for a year and a half, so I haven't been around as long as Mr Wildman, but I can tell you that I have tremendous staff in my office and 95% of everything that comes into my office is handled by my staff. I will tell you also that my staff attend meetings where I am unable to attend, for whatever reason, whether I am at Queen's Park or such. So I think we would be wrong to say — and maybe you can explain this to me. Do northerners really need to see, face to face, their MPP on every occasion, or can they meet with staff? Are they different from those people in the south?

Mr Peterson: No, we're not that different.

Mrs Ross: Okay, I didn't think so. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Mr Hardeman, one minute.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your presentation. I just wanted to say that prior to this life I was a municipal politician. I did have the opportunity to make representation to the boundaries commission. I can

say that making those presentations does make a difference. My riding has in fact changed in such a way as was recommended by the local people who went before the commission.

We've heard a lot of discussion on the difference between the federal MP and the provincial MPP and the workload. In your opinion, do you not see the existence of municipalities and the existence of hospital boards and boards of education dealing with the responsibilities of the province as helping the work of the MPP, as opposed to the MP not having any of those bodies to rely on? They have to deal with all the issues individually, as opposed to the MPP.

Mr Peterson: It may help create work on the one hand. I think if the trend in government continues towards less program funding and more general funding where the municipalities would collect their own dollars for their own services, then you may see less need for presentations directly to one's MPP for matters relating to the province and program funding, because that seems to take up a lot of time.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Peterson, for coming in today. You're the mayor of where?

Mr Peterson: Blind River.

The Acting Chair: Blind River. We're pleased to have you here, sir.

CENTRAL ALGOMA WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Mrs Teresa Miller of the Central Algoma Women Teachers' Association. Welcome.

Mrs Teresa Miller: First, let me thank you very much for allowing me to speak. Second, let me say I feel sorry for all of us. It is 3:30 on a Friday afternoon and I know you've had two days of hearings and are probably going to hear more of the same things that you've heard already. I know most of you are looking at your watches and thinking about planes that you have to catch. Nobody drove?

Mr Wildman: I did.

Mrs Miller: Good for you, Bud.

Mr Young: It's like trying to teach a class at the end of the day, right?

Mrs Miller: Really, yes, it is. In 1983, it was determined by the members of the Legislature that the boundaries commission would hold public hearings on redistribution of the electoral boundaries and that representation in the north could not be less than 15 constituencies. The boundaries commission usually considered the following terms of reference for the purpose of distribution or redistribution: community or diversity of interest; means of communication; topographical features; population trends; special geographic considerations; and accessibility, size and shape were also to be included. The terms of reference in 1983 guaranteed the north 15 seats. I would like to argue our case for ensuring that continued representation by focusing on some of the considerations in the terms of reference.

First we must look at the communities and their diversity of interests. I believe that northern Ontario means economic diversity. The Algoma riding consists of

small communities of miners, steelworkers, farmers, loggers, trappers, fishermen, seasonal employees, small businessmen and a few professionals. We are spread out along the Trans-Canada Highway, tucked away in remote forest regions or nestled along the shores of the Great Lakes. We have distinct ethnic communities like Garden River and Batchewana, both peoples of the first nation, and Dubreuilville and Chapleau, which are predominantly French, each struggling to maintain their unique culture amid the federal political overtones.

Communication has always been a problem in northern Ontario. Where I live in Echo Bay, I can only call two other communities and not pay long distance charges, a distance of about 32 kilometres. The situation is the same throughout the north. So if I were someone trying to phone my MPP, it is very likely that I would have to pay for it. Similarly, our postal system is not conducive to immediate delivery. Because we live out in the country, it takes a week or more to have letters delivered, sometimes to a local post office or to rural postboxes, never to your door.

Some remote northern communities have limited access to the more metropolitan newspapers and rely on local flyers and radio programs for contact with the rest of the province. Most of our communities are not able to access cable television. I doubt if they have ever seen a debate in the House. So these people need to have someone they can talk to face to face. They need to know they have not been forgotten by the bureaucracy of so-called responsible government.

Geographically, the Algoma riding spans 560 kilometres from east to west, but it takes eight hours to drive that distance. That is the same time it takes to drive from Sault Ste Marie to Toronto. I would like to focus on the logistics of dealing with 21,864 eligible voters once a week in an area that covers 40,000 square kilometres. This riding now is larger than many European countries: Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland, to name a few. Changing the boundaries to include Manitouwadge to the west and Killarney to the east would extend the distance to approximately 1,000 kilometres, take 14 hours of driving time and yet still have only one day to do it in. The area would then double in size to 95,000 square kilometres and would equal or be larger than 108 or half of the countries of the world: Austria, Hungary and Portugal, for example.

Having a close affinity with Lake Superior allows us special geographic considerations. Gitche Manitou makes his presence known every November through to May, and sometimes he is relentless. We are also at the mercy of the Arctic winds that sweep down from Hudson Bay. Periodically the jet stream will throw a warm front in there and really liven things up. I cannot impress upon you strongly enough the factor that weather plays in northern Ontario. It defines the very culture of our small communities and the nature of our work, our social activities and our daily lives.

I was hoping there would be a snowstorm to welcome you to northern Ontario so you could have a feel for the driving conditions that our members of Parliament face every week when they have to meet with their voters. Considering that we have winter for six months of the

year and that we have some of the most treacherous highways in Canada, travelling to three and four communities in one day, which Mr Wildman has done for the past 21 years, can be extremely risky. These are the working conditions for anyone living in the north, but more so if part of your job description requires you to travel. It is imperative that you realize the working conditions for northern members are very different from those for people in the south. There is no public transit system. There is one two-lane highway.

1540

The Ontario Climate Centre has given the following statistics for the winter of 1995-96. You can see in November, December and January a definite increase in precipitation. It levelled off from February to April, but if you'll look at the total precipitation for 1996, it's 510 centimetres, compared to 310 the year before. This resulted in a 60% increase in precipitation, one of the heaviest on record. That in turn caused 971 reportable accidents. More than 10% of these in the east were fatalities, and these statistics do not include the farthest west or most northern part of this riding. It forced the closure of the only main traffic artery, Highway 17 east, a total of 39 times, compared to 11 times for the winter of 1993-94, according to the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, Sault office.

The Ontario Provincial Police, Sault detachment, claimed last winter as the worst winter on record as far as hazardous weather conditions. Add to that the fact that the Ministry of Transportation cut back on snow removal services and you literally have an accident waiting to happen. The ministry refused to meet the demands of that winter, and we can only hope Mother Nature will take pity on us this year because we know the government won't. Traditionally, northern Ontario has been synonymous with bad highways. We have, however, seen a major repair of our highway system. Unfortunately, it convinces drivers that smoother highways are safer highways. Smoother highways mean faster highways, and in the winter faster highways accelerate the dangers of being on the road.

I think it is essential that the committee realize that these considerations define the parameters of the working conditions for a minister in northern Ontario. Members of a provincial Parliament sit in the House for four days and on the fifth day are expected to be in their ridings. However, Mr Wildman's day is spent in his car travelling and so he usually spends his sixth day meeting with constituents. While most of his associates from the south are spending time with their families, Mr Wildman is travelling back from some remote community, assuming that the weather conditions are favourable, the highway has not been closed and his car starts.

The intent by this government to change the boundaries was in order to match the boundaries of our federal members of Parliament. I cannot imagine why this government would even equate the two positions; they have absolutely nothing in common. The federal ministers spend three weeks in the House and then a week home in their ridings. The problems facing the federal ministers are on a more global level, things like citizenship and immigration, the Coast Guard, the commissioner of official

languages: important, no doubt, but one can hardly compare them to the bread-and-butter issues that face our provincial representatives on a daily basis.

On Wednesday evening I listened to the debate in the House, and member after member stood to read letters from their constituents, mostly women and children who are worried about eviction notices, their lost welfare cheques, hydro being cut off, and proper medical treatment. These are the families who are being so drastically hurt by this government's agenda. They need to feel secure in the knowledge that there is someone who is available, accessible and committed to them who can be their voice at Queen's Park.

It is a rugged life for many people who choose to live in northern Ontario. Families have lived in the same town for generations. Young people who had moved away in search of jobs or a better lifestyle are finding their way back home again to the security of their communities and families. Jobs are scarce. Many communities are poor, and many more families are on social assistance. The communities are isolated, so we tend to become very insular and very protective of what we have built. We have a different philosophy of life. It takes a long time to earn our trust, but once you have it, it's solid. Mr Wildman has it, as do many of his colleagues in their northern ridings.

In 1992, the Harris Conservatives argued that limiting the size of the constituent seats was necessary to reflect special circumstances and requirements of rural and isolated districts. This government wants to limit the voices of the people in northern Ontario by taking away five representatives at Queen's Park. How does this government think this will reflect the special circumstances and requirements of rural and isolated districts? We require more representation at Queen's Park, not less. It is impossible to expect any elected official to assume the responsibility of representing an area as vast as 95,000 square kilometres, but to have only one day to do it is downright ludicrous.

Northern Ontarians have always understood and appreciated the predicament when it involves representation by population versus regional representation. However, it is imperative, given the strained economic times, the cuts to education and health, the increase in social services that we are experiencing, that we have someone who has established a consistent record of fair and honest representation in the House. It is imperative that the boundaries commission look at their terms of reference with respect to northern Ontario's economics, geography, accessibility, size, shape, diversity and communication. The north requires special considerations in all these areas. Changing the electoral boundaries to limit our voice in the future of this province will only reinforce what we already believe about this government: Their agenda is the only agenda.

The Acting Chair: Mrs Miller, we have 11 minutes for questions. We'll start with the NDP.

Mr Wildman: I just want to make clear that I didn't personally discuss this with Ms Miller before she made her presentation. Also, I do want to make a couple of clarifications. Actually, I have a 1-800 number, as many members do in rural areas, so people can call my office without long distance. I just wanted to make that clarifica-

tion and also to point out, as you did, that last year was an unusually bad winter. It's not the norm; it's above the norm. We're all hoping we don't get a repeat of that.

I also want to make clear, and I'd like you to comment on this, my own personal concern in this matter is not about my own situation personally. It's more about whether or not we are going to have the ability to have good representation by MPPs from whatever political party in northern Ontario. I think my colleague Mr Brown would agree with that. Frankly, I think facing the size of constituencies we're not going to have so much a problem with incumbents, but we're going to have a problem attracting new people to run in northern Ontario in all three political parties. I think it's going to be more difficult for constituents to contact whichever individuals are elected. The incumbents are a different matter. They'll adapt. They'll run, and whoever wins, wins. The question is whether an individual who might be thinking about getting involved will.

This is only going to affect a few ridings because, as Mr Brown pointed out earlier, the urban ridings like Mr Martin's are not affected. You're not going to have that problem in the urban ridings in northern Ontario; it's the rural ones where it may be a problem.

It's been suggested that with new technologies there are other ways to keep in touch, so it's not as necessary for individual members to travel to communities, to be at community events, to attend meetings, meet with constituents, that kind of thing. We don't have digital telephone service yet, but we will, and we don't have cellular telephone service between here and Sudbury or north of the Sault, but eventually we will. In many cases we have faxes and that'll be expanded, and there are other methods.

What's your view on that, that with new technologies there will be other ways that constituents can maintain contact with their MPPs and so it's not as necessary to travel, so the geographic area, road conditions, that kind of thing, aren't as important?

1550

Mrs Miller: I disagree completely. What we're finding now is that if you can afford the new technology, that's great; if you live close to a centre that can access those kinds of technology, that's great. But for most of the communities in northern Ontario, because they are so isolated, first of all, you cannot access a lot of the fax machines, you cannot access the Internet. Most people can't afford computers. They just don't have the money for them. It's fine if you are, as I said, close to Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury, a larger area where you can do that, but for most of the communities in the north, I don't see that as being viable unless the increase in technology or the improvement in technology is so great that they would allow that sort of thing to happen. But in the very near future, no, I don't see that happening.

The Acting Chair: Mr Gilchrist and Mr Young, you have three minutes.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll be brief and leave time for Mr Young. Thank you very much for coming before us and making your presentation here today. Just a couple of very quick comments.

I'm pleased Mr Wildman referred to one of the things I was going to say because there's no need for any

resident of the north to incur phone costs. I believe all the members have — and if they don't, it is not counted out of their budget. They are allowed as much in the way of expenses on the 1-800 service —

Mrs Miller: Thank you for clarifying that. I remember that now.

Mr Gilchrist: That's fine. Minor point. When we talk about technology, we heard yesterday in Dryden that, yes, they are certainly a disparate group of communities and geographically distant in many cases. Some 49 of the 50 first nation communities have fax machines. Mr Micalash, it's on the record yesterday, admitted that he hadn't even travelled to those communities until well after his first election. While it's a lofty goal to suggest that every member should be able to get to every household on any given day, the fact of the matter is that's just not realistic, nor is it expected by people. To suggest then that geography plays an overwhelmingly disproportionate part in the consideration that the boundaries commission could take I think has to be questioned.

Right now the members in the north have the option of how they set their workweek, as do all of us. If I wanted to spend more time in my riding and less time at Queen's Park, I can do that. In our party everyone has two duty days, two other days when you sit on committee if the committee sits. On the other hand —

Mr Wildman: Unfortunately, we don't have the same number that you have.

Mr Gilchrist: You don't have to have a quorum in the House either.

If there was a 50% increase in the workload back in the riding, the member could decide to spend 50% more time. They could go from one day to one and a half or to two days up here, and that's their choice. I really have difficulty with the rationale that just because there are some more households or because of the geography somehow the job is so different that they couldn't organize their workweek.

I guess the very last point I'd like to leave you with is, the defined mandate of the federal boundaries commission is identical to the provincial one. I have to believe that if you had made representations to both, you would have the same community of interest. You would have the same talk about phone expenses and lack of access to technology. You would want, for CPP, employment insurance, young offenders issues, gun control or whatever the issues of the day might be, as equally accessible an MP as you would an MPP, and I don't think you'd make two different presentations.

All we have to satisfy ourselves with is that the federal commission heard people, listened to them, assimilated their suggestions, and the report is very clear: They did hear the north. That's what gives us the comfort that unless something extraordinary was not made evident to the federal commission, we're on the right path here. Sorry. Mr Young, follow-up?

Mr Young: I must say I think you've done a major disservice to the federal MPs, saying that they don't deal with bread-and-butter issues and that the jobs have absolutely nothing in common. I think that's like saying a public school teacher and a high school teacher, those jobs have nothing in common.

Mrs Miller: And you would be right.

Mr Young: Federal MPs deal with bread and butter: immigration, pensions, unemployment insurance, taxes, veterans' affairs, as well as criminal law issues, and they express their views on education and health care. So I think you've done a major disservice to federal MPs and your statement is totally inaccurate.

Mrs Miller: Can I respond now? I don't know how far back I can remember. First of all, my experience comes with being a member of the Algoma riding for 20 years and having the same member of Parliament who has set out, as you said, his agenda, his workweek, and I disagree. Yes, they do need to travel and they do need to knock on doors and they do need to be seen visibly.

One of the previous speakers commented, "No, we're not that much different from the people in the south." I disagree wholeheartedly with that; we are very different from the people in the south. Our whole perspective on how we live, our philosophy, how we approach people, how we look at everything is so completely different. When we see a face coming to the door, and we've seen that face over and over again, we know that person is there and that person is going to listen to us, listen to our concerns and take it back. I have yet to see Mr St Denis. I don't know what the man looks like.

Mr Michael Brown: I appreciate your coming today because I think you've raised a lot of concerns. I've been learning something over the last couple of days, and I think Mr Wildman probably, sharing a constituency similar to the one I represent, would know this.

I have an office in Elliot Lake. My constituency office is in Elliot Lake, which is the largest community in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin. Inevitably what happens is, I go to that office once or twice a month — that doesn't sound like a lot, but once or twice a month — to do constituency appointments. The other two Fridays, I spend one a month in Espanola and the other one I go to the various small communities throughout the constituency.

Frankly, I don't know how I would organize my life much differently than that and still get to see the people. But in terms of Elliot Lake, what never ceases to amaze me is that Monday, after I've been there on Friday, is when they call and they have to see me yesterday. It always happens just after I've been there.

One of the things I've found, and I think maybe the other side doesn't understand this, is that there's an informal culture to the smaller communities, that kind of thinks this access that they've had since the constituencies were initiated is something they should have. It's a service they like. They like to be able to see their member. They like to be able to see me at some kind of event and tell me there's a real problem in something on an informal basis, that they have a real problem with something that has absolutely nothing to do with why we're there in the first place.

It's that informality that provides us with information that we use on a daily basis, and that kind of closeness that comes from small communities is something I think I hear you saying you're afraid will be lost because, as you say, you haven't seen Mr St Denis. He is in as many places as he can be, I know for a fact, and Mr Wildman will tell you that. It's just that the riding is that much

bigger and it is that much more difficult, and it's about to get that much more difficult for him.

Would you agree that's one of the cultural differences, that you expect to see us at these things?

Mrs Miller: Yes, definitely.

Mr Michael Brown: And you'll tell us about the child support payment or something that is on your mind, or whatever the issue is.

Mrs Miller: Yes, absolutely. Mr Young referred to the comparisons between the federal MPs and the provincial MPPs. When I was getting information, I never once looked — well, I tried to look through the phone book and after a while I gave up. I just looked through the government of Ontario pages in the phone book to get the information, because that's where it is. We have information accessibility through those numbers on those pages, not the federal numbers. I'm sorry, I don't see any comparison at all.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Miller, for appearing before us today and presenting your viewpoints.

1600

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

The Acting Chair: Next is Mr Shaw, from District 30 of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Sault division. Mr Shaw, you have 20 minutes you can use at your disposal as you like.

Mr Geoff Shaw: Yes, thank you. I will essentially go through my brief. I'd like to welcome you to Sault Ste Marie. I know the last thing you need to hear is a cranky teacher at 4 o'clock on Friday afternoon when I'd rather be at my TGIF.

The Acting Chair: Not at all, sir.

Mr Shaw: I think I'm probably your last person. Perhaps my first comment in my brief gives you a hint as to the tenor of what's going to follow.

I welcome you to area code 705. I throw that in because Bill 81, in my reading of it, could easily be renamed Bill 905. That seems to be the part of the province sucking up the representation and the power that goes with it. As a little aside, that's also the power base of the government moving the legislation; however, that's just part of my cranky nature, I guess.

The first issue that I should quickly address — and I gather you've heard from some other teacher groups today as well — why I am here as a representative of the secondary teachers — really, not of Sault Ste Marie; that should be of Algoma. This wouldn't seem to be a topic with direct relevance to education; however, it does speak to the general direction of this government as it slashes public spending in what I feel is an ill-advised and ill-considered way. The negative consequences of this slashing will be felt in Ontario for a generation or more, long after this government is gone.

In my years as president locally I've had many hard sessions dealing with the board of education, but I respect the democratic ideals the board represents. I would hate to see it go. This government has made it clear that it intends to create much larger boards, boards that can only be less representative and less democratic. Bill 81 is cut from the same cloth.

You've likely heard everything I'm going to say before. I don't think I can add anything new. I know Mrs Miller was making several points that I'm sure I will allude to as well, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't hear it again. Repetition can sometimes be a valuable learning tool. In any event, I've only got five or six points I'd like to concentrate on.

The issue of course, and everyone is aware of it, is that northern Ontario is going to lose five of its 15 seats. That's one third of the representation at Queen's Park. Other areas are going to lose representation in this shuffle as well but I'm not going to comment on them. I'll concentrate on the north.

Rhetorically, why should this be a concern? After all, it is intended to create a cheaper government. The question really has to be, is it better? Is it more democratic? Or are these issues even being considered by this government?

The so-called commonsense but anti-social offensive in Ontario has become infamous for reducing all issues to budgetary considerations: whether this or that will save money from the treasury so that savings can be channelled into servicing the debt or paying for a tax cut. No other consideration is allowed; not the people's education, health, social services, not even, it seems, the political process. Nothing escapes this simple-minded exercise, no matter what the damage to the society.

The size of ridings must be based on factors other than population — I heard the byplay here a moment ago — but like anything else in our complex society this issue is more complicated than it would appear at first. If population were the only factor, then the entire Yukon and Northwest Territories would not warrant representation by one MP. The new Tory government just elected in Prince Edward Island could hold its legislative sessions in the corner doughnut shop; that's how many members they would have. There certainly would be no need for an expensive Legislature.

Fortunately for the citizens of PEI, if not for Ontario, there is a well-established principle that geography, demographics and regionalism must be taken into account along with representation by population in determining riding boundaries.

The human factor: How much physical space can one individual deal with must also be part of any calculation of riding boundaries. Most of the ridings in the north are already immense; the citizens will be not well served by making any of them even larger. This diminishes the role of the MLA in Ontario and diminishes the democratic principles they represent.

As meaningful as the work of the MLA in Queen's Park is, MLAs are of most significance and have the most value for the citizens of this province when doing work in their constituencies when the Legislative Assembly is not sitting, unless the members of the committee consider only time spent in the Legislature as their job, much as many seem to think my job ceases when the class leaves the room. Obviously it doesn't apply to this group.

I go on to quote from one MLA, and I can't even remember which one I pulled this from: "It doesn't really matter whether you're a Tory, a Liberal or an NDPer. The physical requirements of being in a number of places all

at the same time cannot be solved, regardless of what party you're with." Making the ridings larger simply exacerbates that problem. In Algoma, Mr Wildman's riding obviously, going from 36,000 square kilometres to 70,000 boggles the mind.

To pick up again from what Mrs Miller was saying, the reality of the north is vastly different from that of the south. We don't have any freeways. We have a few sections of four-lane highway but definitely not anything you would call a freeway. We don't have — well, I said "reliable air service" but quickly corrected myself. We do have reliable air service where it exists. We just have a lot of communities that don't have air service, period. There are enormous distances to cover if the citizens are to be properly represented. A visit to the communities in one's riding can take literally weeks to accomplish, and add a northern winter, as Mrs Miller was saying as well.

We in the north often get the impression that as far as most people at Queen's Park are concerned Ontario ends somewhere just north of Highway 7. This is a very narrow and parochial view of the province, but I feel it's alive and well in this piece of legislation.

Next, I heard in the comment period after Mrs Miller's presentation — it's easy enough to say: "The feds do it. Why can't provincial MPPs do it? What's so different?" My first comment is that there are different kinds of issues. I know Mr Young was saying that we did a disservice to Ron Irwin by comments like this, but I still feel that the roles are not the same. MLAs deal with the micro-issues much more than do the MPs. They deal with the municipalities, they deal with the personal problems, the local issues, things like family support, social assistance, day care, housing, the down-and-dirty everyday stuff, and it requires being there.

The comment was made about, would I be implying or would Mrs Miller be implying that elementary and secondary teachers were therefore different? My answer to that would be: You want to believe it. My job as a secondary teacher is enormously different from somebody teaching kindergarten or grade 1 or grade 2. I would be absolutely terrified to step into that position. I would be completely out of my depth. Yes, it is a very different job.

There is much more need in the provincial system for the individual to have direct contact with his or her representative. Legislators must be accessible to their constituents if they are to develop a sensitivity to the interests of those constituents. A fax machine, a telephone, a computer modem, and whatever else you want to add, don't constitute accessibility. There is no substitute for personal contact.

As an aside, I assume the answer to this question is yes, that the government does intend to allow more staff for these enlarged ridings. I would like to see the cost of putting a staff person in all the communities in Algoma, for instance. It will be a little bit of a different problem.

Talk, personal interaction, problem solving, not driving from one remote location to another, should be the task of our representatives.

Mrs Miller also commented on the community-interest concept. I'm not going to go over that again, the wide range of communities in our northern rural ridings.

We already have too many alienated people in this province, alienated from the very people who profess to

govern in their interests. We don't need more. This is a centralization of power in Toronto and in the hands of cabinet and will only serve to further alienate the citizens of this province, in particular those in the north.

Centralization not only concentrates power in the south — not only does the north lose five seats — but it also dramatically increases the cabinet's power. There will be even fewer backbenchers and their voice, whether in government or out, will be diminished. The powerful get even more power. The bill does far more than just send 27 chairs to the dump, as so simply put by the Premier. The issues, as I said earlier, are far too complex for simplistic photo opportunities. This bill would redistribute the power that those seats represent while disfranchising the voters of the north. This is a refutation of the claims of inclusion made by this government when it came to power. The Premier says this bill constitutes leadership by example, but it really seems to be an example of a naked power grab.

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In conclusion, the reduction in the number of seats fails to address the Harris government's self-proclaimed mission of making government accountable. Neither does it make politicians more accessible. In fact, it contributes to less effective representation and diminishes the concept of government and, by extension, the concept of community. This alienation of the individual citizen from the legislator only aggravates the sense of alienation of northern Ontarians from Toronto. It's too easy to rubber-stamp the federal boundaries. To do so denies the communities of interest that have developed throughout the north.

One writer in the *Toronto Star* commented: "The main reason advanced to justify cutting the size of the Legislature to 103 seats is the need to save money. The sums expended to sustain legislators are very small when weighed in the provincial balance, but slashing them has great symbolic resonance." An editorial went on to call the savings "a drop in the deficit bucket." There are no significant savings to be realized by this move. The real issue would seem to be, as one of the Liberal MLAs said, that it's about downsizing democracy: "All you want to do is eventually replace all of us with 1-800 numbers."

Well, there's a price to democracy. Sometimes the price is paid with lives. We've just finished commemorating the sacrifice made by Canadians in two world wars to protect democracy. At other times, the price of democracy is much less dramatic. In fact, it may just come down to dollars, and this is one of those times. Thank you for your attention late on a Friday afternoon.

The Acting Chair: Mr Shaw, we have some questions for you. We have about 10 minutes, 3 minutes for each side, starting with Mr Gilchrist from the government.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Shaw, for coming before us here today. I'm going to start with your very first paragraph, your opening premise. I'm curious to know, considering that this commitment was made in May 1994, 13 months before the election, were you and your colleagues confident of the PC government winning an overwhelming majority government, a year before the election?

Mr Shaw: I'm sorry, what commitment are you referring to?

Mr Gilchrist: You're suggesting that our commitment to make our boundaries coincidental with the federal boundaries, which is part of the Common Sense Revolution, is somehow a power grab: "Strange perhaps that it is also the power base of the government moving the legislation." So we're to believe, since that's your opening premise, that this is politically motivated, that this is gerrymandering, that somehow we knew in May 1994 that we would win all the seats in area code 905.

Mr Shaw: Let's put it this way: I think in May 1994 you had a very good idea of where your power base was and that this was a very safe promise to make.

Mr Gilchrist: Oh, really?

Mr Shaw: I would assume that your pollsters would have had —

Mr Gilchrist: That's very interesting, because at the time the Liberal Party was standing at something like 52% in the polls and we were at 16%, before we came out with what I think many people have regarded as a visionary document, quite frankly the first time a would-be government has had the commitment, the integrity, to put forward their election plank that far before an election.

The other thing I find somewhat distressing is that in everything we've heard in our two days so far in the north and that I suspect we'll hear again in Timmins tomorrow, it's very much a north versus south attitude here. We haven't heard anyone say that there's a transition area, that Parry Sound, Nipissing, Muskoka are sort of half-north, half-south. We haven't heard that there are even a variety of differences between urban and rural northern seats, and I intuitively find a problem with that. We've just heard north versus south.

If the north is losing five but the south is losing 22 of the existing seats today, I wonder if you can explain to me why it wouldn't be perceived that the south is losing four times the voice it currently has. Let's leave aside rep by pop. It's losing four times the number of voices it has at Queen's Park and, if I go to your last page, it would therefore follow, four times the number of people there articulating messages for their constituents at Queen's Park. Why this focus on the five seats in the north when the south is losing four times as much?

Mr Shaw: As I said at the beginning, I did say other areas of the province were also losing seats and losing voices. I'm not talking about just the north. My concern is the fact that with any of these seats, whether it be the five here or the 20 in the south, you are taking away the voice of the people. You're taking away representation, diminishing democracy in this province.

Mr Gilchrist: So you're not saying the north is being treated unfairly relative to the rest of the province. I don't want to put words in your mouth, and I'm not suggesting for a second that you're agreeing with the bill, but you are telling us that you do not believe the north is being singled out?

Mr Shaw: Oh, I didn't say that.

Mr Gilchrist: Fair enough. Let me just ask one last thing then, because I know our time is short. I appreciate that we have an advantage that you don't, because we sit in the caucus meetings and we know the available time to try and articulate the views of our constituents. The previous two governments also had significant majorities;

without splitting hairs on the exact numbers, they too had more or less the number of government members. We have 82 people, and we have a two-hour caucus meeting. Does it stand to reason that if the same number of people in this province were represented by, just to pick a number, 60 government members, each person in that room would have 25% more time each meeting to articulate their views, a 25% greater chance of being able to be on the agenda to be heard? Is that not a logical assumption, that, ironically, you can get to the point where there are so many voices clamouring to be heard that literally that's what allows the cabinet to some extent to go off on their own direction, because they don't get a chance to hear from all the sides? There's never enough time.

Leaving all the other factors aside, and I'm asking you this one very simple fact, if there were 60 voices in that caucus room, would we not have a better time, each of us, standing up for our residents than we do with 82?

Mr Shaw: Do you want to carry that argument a little further?

Mr Gilchrist: No, I didn't carry it further than that because I think that's a realistic number looking at the downsize.

Mr Shaw: Make it 20, make it 10, make it 50. What you're doing —

Mr Gilchrist: I'm despairing of the fact that at some point, and this is now five days, somebody will give me a straight answer to a question.

Mr Shaw: The straight answer is that of course you're going to have more say within the caucus hearings. On the other hand, the individual, the person I am out in the riding, does not have as much chance to get hold of one of those people, because there are fewer of them and there are more of us.

Mr Gilchrist: It's a tradeoff there.

Mr Michael Brown: Thank you for your presentation. Having listened to your presentation, you raised one issue, and I think it's a significant issue, that hasn't been raised by too many presenters, what I believe to be one of the grand agendas of this government, and that is quite simply the transfer of effective power from the legislative branch to the executive branch of government.

It seems quite clear to me, when we look at the consolidation of power in the Premier's office and in the whiz kids, that this is what this is really about. It's really about taking it out of the Legislature where people may say things that affront the government or may not always agree with the government, and it is better — always under the guise of efficiency of course — to take that power behind the closed doors to make the decisions and essentially shut out the voice of the constituents — not our voice as politicians; we are attempting to mirror the views being held in our constituencies.

My university schooling was in history and political science so it seems quite apparent to me. Perhaps you could elaborate a little more about this shift from the assembly to the imperial power of the cabinet.

Mr Shaw: My background is the same.

Democracy is messy. It really is. It's not efficient at all, and anybody who tries to make democracy more efficient is scary. I'm frightened when people start to say we need to make this democratic system more efficient. Efficiency

and democracy are completely antithetical. Democracy is messy, and it has to be. That means a lot of people, it means a lot of voices, the more the better, the more the merrier — not the fewer the better, not the more efficient the better, but the more voices. I find this very frightening, that indeed you take away the voices and you concentrate the power in the hands of the cabinet.

Mr Martin: I just want to clarify a couple of things. We have today, on a couple of occasions, both Mr Wildman and Mr Brown, spoken to the difference between urban and rural ridings in northern Ontario. To suggest that we haven't is just not true.

Another thing is just to point out that I make no apology for saying that northern Ontario is being dealt with unfairly by this piece of legislation. We're losing five out of 15; the south is losing 22 out of 115. We're losing 33% of our voice; they're losing 18% of their voice. That's clear, that's unequivocal, that's non-arguable, which gets me to the question I've wanted to ask for a while now but haven't really had a chance.

You belong to a provincial organization and you know what it's like to go from northern Ontario to southern Ontario and to be immersed in the large number of people who show up at these meetings and to have your voice heard, to have your concerns understood and to have decisions made that reflect that real and genuine concern.

I remember, as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, going to a small school near Midland where they were trying for years to get some renovation done. You could actually see through the floorboards down to the ground. In order to get a drink of water out of the fountain, you had to touch the thing with your lips, so there was all kinds of possibility for — but they could never get it past the school board in Barrie, because there were too many of them and there was only one representative for the whole area they were in. Whenever you went to Barrie to go to the meetings, there were about 19 he had to deal with, or whatever.

My experience, and I think I share it with my northern colleagues, is that when you go down to the south, whether you like it or not, numbers are important. The more voices you have, the more clout you have, the more ability you have to make your point and get your concern heard. What's been your experience in your organization re that whole question?

Mr Wildman: By the way, Mr Stewart said that OSSTF was very democratic.

Mr Shaw: I wasn't sure how much sarcasm there was in that. However, I won't belabour that point. He's not here to respond.

My experience is very similar. We have a constant fight with our provincial office and with the rest of the province in terms of representation from the north. We have to ensure that there are as many bodies and as many voices present as possible, otherwise we get lost in the shuffle. You're dead right: 33% fewer voices in the Legislature. We face the same kinds of problems. Any province-wide organization does. Yes, if you're not from the north it's going to sound like a lot of cranky whining. It's the reality of living in the north.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Shaw, for bringing in your views. We didn't find you cranky at all. We had a good exchange. Have a good weekend.

Mr Sergio: Can we give my friend Mr Turco another few minutes, Mr Chair?

The Acting Chair: No, he had his 20.

Mr Wildman: Mr Chair, I'd like to table with the committee two letters from municipalities in Algoma district: one is from the township of Dubreuilville, which is a francophone community in the northern part of the district — they weren't able to attend because of the distance; and one other from the township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional.

The Acting Chair: The clerk will ensure that they're distributed in Toronto.

Ted has a 10-second advertisement.

Mr Glenn: I have distributed one copy per caucus of research response to Mr Colle's request for information and Mr Wildman's request for information, which were changes to the number of ridings in each province, as well as the Camp commission's recommendations on representation in districts in Ontario. If you have any questions, you can ask me.

The Acting Chair: A housekeeping item: We're heading to Timmins, so be at the front door at 8:15 tonight. The charter goes out at 9:20.

Thank you very much for participating in today's events. I declare this particular session adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1625.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent PC)
*Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough PC)
Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre / -Centre PC)
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*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
*Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Michael Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin L) for Mrs Pupatello
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Carroll
Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma ND) for Mr Mr Wood

Clerk / Greffière: Ms Lynn Mellor

Staff / Personnel: Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Stephen Capaldo, Legislative Interpretation and Translation Service

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Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Saturday 23 November 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Samedi 23 novembre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 réduisant
le nombre de députés



Chair: Jack Carroll
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Saturday 23 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Samedi 23 novembre 1996

The committee met at 0909 in La Ronde Cultural Centre, Timmins.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Acting Chair (Mr John Hastings): We will bring the Timmins version of Bill 81 to attention. Before we get started, I'm sure M. Bisson has a few words to say. You get 12 seconds, sir.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): My reputation precedes me. Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I would like to welcome members of the committee to the city of Timmins. I'm sure the presentations today will be varied and interesting, and on behalf of the community and of the people in the riding of Cochrane South, we welcome you. But don't be too comfortable; this is a New Democratic riding, after all, and we want to keep it that way.

I would like to ask one other thing, Mr Chair. As I understand, the 2pm spot from the Hearst university has cancelled. I would ask the permission of the rest of the committee: There is a gentleman here by the name of Marc Lachance who would like to make a presentation to the committee in French.

Le Président suppléant : Est-ce qu'il y a un problème ? Non. D'accord.

MRS JOYCE WARREN

The Acting Chair: Our first presenter is Joyce Warren. You have 20 minutes in which to make your presentation. Take it up all by yourself, or whatever's left, we'll have some questions for you equally divided among the three caucuses.

Mrs Joyce Warren: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am here not because I represent a specific agency, but I believe I do represent a growing group of those who love this province and are increasingly apprehensive with regard to the motivation of the present government, who are racing to effect changes such as this one without an

appropriate consideration of the long-term consequences of such a move.

I was born, raised and educated to post-graduate level in the province of Ontario. I'm a fifth-generation Canadian. I have been privileged to raise a large family and to practise my profession of clinical psychology in Toronto, Ottawa and, for the past 17 years, in northeastern Ontario. It might be interesting to those coping with the medical profession at the moment that I came up here 17 years ago for a two-year period. I never went back and I have no intention of going back.

I've lived under Liberal, Conservative and NDP provincial governments for all of my life. Although I had normal and typical concerns regarding some of the policies of each government, I never had any reason to doubt in the past that the elected members were motivated by anything but a common goal of governing the province in their perception of the best interests of the citizens who reside in that province. After all, in the history of the western world, democratic governments are assumed to be governments by the people and for the people. I lifted that one from the United States Constitution because I couldn't think of ours.

Governments are there, in my estimation, to manage resources equitably and to keep the less idealistic and avaricious citizens from exploiting resources or others for material gain. Democracy may not be a perfect system, but it aims at a level of law and humanity which has slowly improved the conditions of living for the human race, especially during the present century.

Canada is envied throughout the world for its humanity and for the equality of its citizens. Ontario, as the wealthiest of the provinces, largely because of the endowment of natural resources which come from our north, has been able to raise the standard of living for its most vulnerable citizens by assigning some of its wealth to those who are less able and by developing an educational system superior to many in the western world, including Great Britain and the United States.

Nothing in our political or social history has prepared us to anticipate a government which would take advantage of our gullibility to, first of all, make promises that we should have known could only be kept at great sacrifice to our citizens, but especially to vulnerable people — the poor, the handicapped and the children; secondly, that they would use their majority to bulldoze through legislation such as this, which significantly affects the largest geographical area in Ontario, and would strive to do so without any consultation either with those directly affected or with planners experienced and trained in those areas affecting decision-making.

The hearings today, as with the hearings for the omnibus bill, are only being held because of the vociferous challenge by the opposition parties for at least some semblance of consultation with the affected groups that heretofore has characterized the democratic process. While there are many of us now who have reason to be somewhat cynical as to the possibility of any effective change, we will doggedly pursue our right to be heard. Historically, dictatorships always are accompanied by and tend to create an underground of significant resistance.

Everyone knows that we have never had dictatorships in Canada. We know what they are, of course, especially at my age, because we had to fight the greatest one of all time. We know that there are dictators in Third World countries; we associate them with violent revolutions and overthrows of leaderships. We don't expect them to slip into power disguised as traditional political parties even when they openly refer to their policies as "revolutionary."

This government learned its strategy well in order to gain power. This may sound familiar to those at least in my age group. You first identify a group that the general population is happy to hate: in this case, welfare recipients. You promote the removal of obvious irritants — photo-radar, gun control — and guarantee a pie-in-the-sky reward: a tax cut.

Once in control, you move with incredible speed to deregulate and dismantle as many controls as you can which have been legislated by previous governments, including Conservative governments, that were put into place to preserve resources for future generations. Our future generations may not have a deficit; they may not have a province. You make massive changes in education and health care, many of which will be irreversible, and you do all of this without consultation.

I'm not sure those great minds propelling the Tory agenda, those minds behind the Premier and cabinet, of course, are aware that common sense is defined in Webster's Dictionary as the unreflective and naïve judgements of ordinary men. In my profession, which is psychology, common sense has always been synonymous with ignorance, naïveté and uninformed opinion.

Those of us who believe we are in the control of a juggernaut determined to wreak as much havoc on the province as may be possible in their term of office also recognize that there are no mechanisms available other than the electoral process to overthrow a government thinly disguised as democratic. That Ontario has never before experienced such massive protests by so many unrelated and diversified groups would certainly raise concerns, or should, among members of Parliament accountable to their ridings. Ontario at the moment should not and cannot be dismissed as one big interest group.

This government is great on buzzwords. The legislation being discussed today has not been named the Fewer Politicians Act for nothing. "Politician," if you look in your dictionary, also has two definitions. One is that a politician is one actively involved in the business of government, which would seem to describe our parliamentary representatives in the north. The second definition is of a person primarily interested in political offices

from selfish or other usually narrow and short-lived interests. Does this sound familiar?

In the latter context, we could certainly do without politicians altogether. In the first meaning, of course, the present bill will drastically cut the representation that the north has in Queen's Park. Unfortunately, the second definition is the one that ordinary citizens believe appropriate to those who run for public office. The Daily Press here runs a daily question of the man in the street. I have no doubt that if the question of the day to the citizens in the street were, "Can we do with fewer politicians?" the majority would probably enthusiastically respond in the affirmative. On the other hand, if the question is asked, "Do you believe that one person can represent the citizens who reside in north Cochrane and south Cochrane and the communities up the James Bay coast?" those asked are likely to think the interviewer is crazy.

There are historic precedents for changing boundaries. There are also established procedures and mechanisms for doing so. This government, truly consistent in its approach, has followed none of these. Since this government clearly has its own agenda, one wonders about the haste and the secrecy. This government needs money in a hurry, obviously. They've got a real commitment there. But the effect of reducing the number of elected representatives will only be felt fiscally after the next election, when the government is likely to be gone, we hope. Still, diminishing the voice of those demanding services for remote communities and lobbying for protection of the natural resources on which corporations are dependent are sufficient reasons for the cabinet to take these unprecedented steps.

0920

Northeastern Ontario is unique in every way. To simply move boundaries artificially is to totally ignore the social fabric of the north. Unlike southern Ontario, each community has a very distinct character of its own and is quite unique. No matter how conscientious a member of the provincial Parliament is — and we've been blessed with highly selfless ones here — to represent an extremely divergent population spread over an area greater than that of many countries and of 40 American states is a task beyond human capability.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the government has just passed, equally hastily and without public fanfare, the environmental bill which effectively removes the environmental controls put into place to protect the environment from exploitation and to preserve the environment for future generations. Although the Niagara Escarpment does not exist in the north, we have the same vulnerability. The Niagara Escarpment has just been freed from protection and will no doubt be covered by houses within the next two years. While the present government would like you to believe that pesky environmental controls were put into effect by mushy NDP governments, the Tory government under Bill Davis had a great responsibility for this as well.

Similarly this government has handed responsibility for the management of minerals and forestry, our two main industries, to those corporations which have a vested interest financially.

These are all reasons for opposing any effort to reduce the number of elected representatives in the north.

In conclusion, up to June 1995, Ontario was not considered by many to be a distinct society in comparison with the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland. We are unique, however, in the geographical vastness, the riches of our forests and minerals, and the great diversity of our population. We've had stable governments of all political philosophies but with a common goal of preserving Ontario and providing for all of its citizens regardless of their ability to be productive. Perhaps we will live to see it again. The question is, however, how many changes can the province sustain and what is motivating this government to effect changes fast and furiously which may in the long run damage the fabric of our society?

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Warren. We have some questions for you. We have eight minutes. I'll give three to each member on this round, starting with the Liberal opposition.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): Joyce, thank you very much for your presentation today. It's very well written, and in fact I would almost say it was in the form of a manifesto to get rid of this government. I think you describe it very, very well. We have always said that this was a very bullying government. I think in this particular bill what you've pointed out is that in this case this government is bullying democracy and especially, as you point out, in northern Ontario.

I'm not sure that everyone in the province, or maybe even northern Ontario, understands that proportionately we will be losing more representation than southern Ontario as we will lose a third of our seats. Generally the reduction is around 20% across the whole province, so again, the north is going to have a weakened voice. These hearings for the last couple of days have given an opportunity to citizens of the north to cry out, as you have, against this government. I, like you, am very concerned about it and I appreciate your coming here today and bringing this forward. These are words of inspiration for all of us who want to see democracy alive and well in Ontario. Again, I want to thank you very much for your comments.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thank you very much, Joyce, for your excellent presentation. You've covered a lot of territory. I notice in one area you're saying that the reason for all of the drastic changes that are being made seems to be the major tax cut that was promised during the election campaign, which a lot of people are saying is silly if you're going to destroy health care, education, and eliminate a lot of the representation that northern Ontario has at Queen's Park. It's silly to bring forward this legislation and other pieces of legislation that are going to reward the wealthy with any savings that might come through a tax cut and, at the same time, reduce the number of politicians at Queen's Park.

Back in 1992, the Conservative caucus at that time passed a resolution saying the geographical area and the population in northern Ontario should be respected, and it was passed by all three political parties that northern Ontario should be respected in any reorganization of the boundaries. Now we see this legislation is being brought forward that is going to eliminate one riding, the riding of Timiskaming, which is Liberal. Some people say,

"Why are you trying to defend that riding when it's a Liberal member there?" But it's a matter of there being two ridings instead of three, so one of the three politicians — myself, Gilles Bisson or David Ramsay — would not be around in the next election because there will only be room for two elected members. I just want to give you an opportunity if you want to make further comments on that.

Mrs Warren: First of all, I have a vested interest in education. I've been an educational consultant in major cities and up north for 35 years now, so I have real concerns there and I can speak in an educated way. I have also perhaps — there may be people here who can argue with me — a rather unique situation in that I was born in Toronto, lived in Toronto and Ottawa as well as other countries, but came up here 17 years ago and ran a children's program that covered all of the areas in northeastern Ontario. In other words, I'm as familiar with Holtby, Peawanuck and Attawapiskat as I am with Timmins and New Liskeard, and when I globalize here that these areas are quite unique, they are quite unique.

It's hard to represent them because, for example, New Liskeard people don't want to know much about Timmins. There are just characters that people can't possibly know. Anyone who has come up here or lived here has a much greater understanding of the south and its total and complete lack — we have a major children's program here that has been grossly unsuccessful because it was planned in Queen's Park. It's called integrated services for northern children and it is a very poorly functioning agency because it was designed by people in the south who had no genuine concept of the north or how it works. The population is an issue which should not —

Mr Len Wood: It's unique.

Mrs Warren: Oh yes, the population is unique. The fact that there are 100,000 people in 200,000 miles of territory makes it even more important by my standards and most standards that this area should have more political representation.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Thank you, Mrs Warren. I'm unfortunately not going to be quite as fulsome in my praise of your presentation.

Mrs Warren: That doesn't surprise me.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm very distressed at the tone, and perhaps before I unfairly characterize anything, it's the media up here that have fed certain misconceptions. For example, you mentioned health cuts. How you can go from \$17.4 billion to \$17.7 billion and call it a cut I'd be very intrigued to know.

You talk about a lack of responsible government. How you reconcile that with an NDP government that doesn't even have a single day of legislative sitting for the entire last year. If you want to talk about dictatorships, you had no input, no member, no opposition party had any input for an entire year while they continued to spend this province to \$100 billion worth of debt.

I take it that keeping promises is something you have great difficulty with. We laid out 13 months before the election — the first time any political party in the history of this country has had the courage and, quite frankly, the integrity, to put forward its entire election campaign 13

months before an election to give people the time to analyse every one of those commitments, to ask the questions of the candidates, to get answers that satisfied them. Now when we fulfil those promises, you suggest that somehow that's being dictatorial. I think that's very unfair. That's extraordinarily unfair, and to equate our government, which still, by the way, has 52% popular support, up from 45% the day of the election, with a Third World dictatorship is the height of unfairness.

0930

We've started off here this morning with all sorts of misinformation. In 1992, a resolution by a specific Conservative member, endorsed by all three parties, not by the Conservative caucus, said there should be a differentiation in terms of population of the types of riding. It didn't mention northern Ontario. It mentioned urban, urban-rural, and rural, and that is exactly what the federal boundaries commission takes into account as well. They did that. The ridings in the north have an average of 40% less population than the ridings in the south. They have taken into account the extra geography.

I guess my final comment is —

Mr Len Wood: What's your question?

The Acting Chair: Do you have a question, Mr Gilchrist?

Mr Gilchrist: — in your profession, "common sense" is considered to be synonymous with ignorance, naïveté and uninformed opinion." I must say that whatever your opinion of politicians, if that's really what clinical psychologists believe, that common sense is ignorance, I suggest that that same question posed by the daily press, if you were to ask that question of the people of Timmins: "Do you believe common sense is equated with ignorance and naïveté?" they would believe the interviewer.

Mrs Warren: Have I got time to respond to that?

The Acting Chair: Briefly.

Mrs Warren: There are two things I resent very much: the implication that people tend to be influenced by the media and that the media has influenced my opinion. This is not the case. What is the case is that since June 1995 we have been presented, and I just have again, with a completely repetitive, stereotyped rhetoric — "We have a deficit; we are popular; we have this," — which, when heard over and over again, is used to disguise the fact that you have in this province never experienced the pain and the social unrest that we are seeing in the Days of Action, which are just a beginning.

If you don't pay attention to the significance — and your leader, even with Tom Long behind him, is gloriously able to continue with this. But those are the facts, not the deficit. Those are the facts, what is actually happening —

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mrs Warren, for your presentation today.

WILLIAM FERRIER

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is Mr William Ferrier. You have 20 minutes you can use as you like, or if your submission is shorter, than there will be some questions, I'm sure. Proceed.

Rev William Ferrier: My name is the Reverend William Ferrier. I'm a United Church clergyman. I'm also a past member of the Legislature from the years 1967 to 1977, and I can assure those who may not be members after the redistribution that there is life after Queen's Park.

Mr Gilchrist: Probably a better one.

Mr Ferrier: Mr Chairman and members of the committee, I wish to thank you for coming to Timmins to hear representations on the electoral representation act in this area. The fact that this bill has reached this stage without any prior public consultation is shocking since previous redistributions in 1962, 1973 and 1983, all by PC governments, provided for consultation and public hearings from the people throughout the province before the bills were finally enacted.

This bill will enact major changes in the size and number of northern ridings. We shall lose power, influence and voice by the loss of five MPPs, while the remaining 10 members will be hard-pressed to adequately represent us. All of these proposed changes have been put forward, and decisions will likely be taken, without any prior input from northern residents, who are adversely affected. This is just another example of how others make major decisions affecting our lives and tell us what is best for us.

This adds to the sense of alienation and frustration that we experience as northerners. There is a sense that everything is decided for us by politicians and bureaucrats at Queen's Park who do not really understand our needs, concerns and way of life. We are either ignored or taken for granted by these southerners. Our economy in mining and forest products creates great wealth for others and contributes significantly to government revenue, and yet we do not benefit to the extent that we should.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ed Deibel of North Bay travelled the north country to promote a separate province for the north and to sign up supporters. He made some headway and garnered some support for the political party that he hoped to get recognized. His movement eventually disappeared. However, this piece of legislation will lead someone, I'm sure, to revive the movement for a northern Ontario province. We have been further disfranchised and alienated. Our democratic voice has been threatened, and what is even more alarming is that it has been done by the Premier who purports to be a northerner.

This bill, in making the provincial constituency boundaries coterminous with the federal ones, reduces the number of constituencies from 130 to 103, if my information is correct. All these ridings come from either rural Ontario or northern Ontario, while two or three are added to the greater Metropolitan area. The influence of both rural and northern Ontario will be diminished while more power will be concentrated in urban Toronto.

It is unusual, in my experience, for a provincial government to let a federal government do its thinking and planning. If other provinces were to follow Ontario, Prince Edward Island could be governed by four MLAs, not 27. Obviously, other governments do not agree, because they see that provincial issues, such as health, education, resource management and transportation, more

directly affect people's lives than most federal matters do. Therefore, they make provision for more representatives to deal with these important matters.

While I see the need for redistribution, I really question the drastic reduction of Ontario MPPs to 103. Rural southern Ontario can speak for itself, although may I say that the present day PC MPPs who represent those ridings that will be adversely affected must be a more docile lot than the ones I knew in the Robarts and Davis eras.

The proposed constituency of Timmins-James Bay is massive, and the differences in the needs and interests of the communities to be served are also significantly different. From Timmins to Peawanuck is 760 kilometres. Several of the communities are only accessible by air. Our own special interests and ways of life cannot be represented adequately, especially if we are lumped together more than we already are.

In his statement to the Legislature when he introduced this legislation, the Premier said, "We heard repeatedly that government at every level has become too big, too cumbersome, too costly and too unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of the people who pay for it, the taxpayers." We have already seen a significant number of civil servants and public sector workers cut and offices closed in northern communities. More power is concentrated in fewer hands further removed from us, the northern taxpayers. With fewer MPPs we shall have less clout in challenging the bureaucrats who interpret the policies of government and who allocate public spending. This bill makes government more, not less, unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of the taxpayers.

The government is set on saving money, but sometimes the costs of the changes made may far outweigh the money saved. Greater attention needs to be paid to quality-of-life issues and the legitimate needs of people. While there will be money saved by reducing the number of constituencies, on the other hand the 10 northern members will need additional money for travel, additional offices and other support staff and services to meet the needs of their constituents. This will eat up some of the savings.

The MPP's work will significantly increase. With the loss of civil servants and the cutbacks in the provincial services, dissatisfied taxpayers will seek out their MPPs more often than they do now. With the rumours we hear of contracting out certain government services to the private sector and the layoffs in northern civil servants, there will be more work for the MPP who will have to take the complaints and concerns of taxpayers to try to get the action or satisfaction for them as there are few other ways to be heard. However, rather than at least maintaining the representatives there to listen to northerners, it will be more difficult with fewer members having to consult more constituents who are scattered throughout larger geographic areas. So the work will increase and representation will be more difficult. People will see much less of their member, no matter how conscientious he or she is.

0940

People who live in Timmins are much different than people who live in Peawanuck, and all northerners are much different than people who live in Toronto. We are

all Ontario taxpayers, but the message that this legislation will reinforce is that some Ontarians are more valued than others. The voice of the northerners will be much more easily ignored as a result of this legislation. In order that further dissatisfaction and deepened alienation of northerners with government be avoided, I suggest that northern representation be restored to 15 and riding boundaries be readjusted only to reflect any changes in population. If you leave the bill as it presently stands, our democratic rights will be significantly diminished.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Ferrier. We have approximately nine minutes for questions. We'll start this round with the NDP.

Mr Bisson: Bill, thank you very much for your presentation. Just prior to the question, I want to touch on one thing because you touched on it in your presentation and when Mr Gilchrist was speaking earlier, the changes to ridings have always been done through a boundaries commission, which is the point that we're trying to make, and that the boundaries commission has the responsibility, first of all, of being a non-political body appointed by the government and agreed to by the three parties who go through the province to look at all the issues when it comes to redistribution, whatever they might be. Then those recommendations are made to the cabinet and it's up to the Legislature to either agree or disagree and make any amendments further to that through a legislative committee such as we're doing now. I think that's one of the points that Bill makes in the committee that needs to be put forward.

The other point is that there was a private member's bill passed by Tories, at least during the time that we were government, that said when you're doing changes to ridings that you have to take into account the geography. That's what Mr Villeneuve's bill was all about, to make sure that the ridings didn't become so large that they became impossible to service. I think Bill has a perspective of that, being a former member of the Legislature. These ridings are quite large.

I'm lucky. The riding of Cochrane South is serviceable. There are three communities, Matheson, Iroquois Falls and Timmins, and if I want, I can get from one part of my riding to the other in a day. It's hard to do but it's possible, and if the member chooses, they can do the best they can to represent. The point that Bill makes is that it will become more difficult to represent all the communities from all the way up to Attawapiskat and down to Timmins and try to do that in any kind of a real way, given the size of the ridings, and I think that's something that you need to hear quite specifically.

I have two questions, Bill. The first question is, taking off on the comments that Mr Gilchrist said a little bit earlier, he was saying we need to take into account that population shifts have occurred. We don't have the population base in northern Ontario — and I don't want to put words in his mouth but I guess the inference is to warrant 15 seats. What do you say to that?

Mr Ferrier: The people aren't here to the same extent but before there was always 25% under the set amount, 25% under or 25% over, and that provided some balance and some fairness. But with the scattered communities and the time it takes to drive from here to Kapuskasing,

a little over two hours, and in the winter you never know just what kind of road conditions you're going to confront — I'm not sure whether Hearst is in this proposed riding or not. Well, that's another hour and a half — if the member were from Timmins, it would take a long time. They would probably have to stay overnight to go to the number of communities that are here, some of the small communities. It would take, I suggest, probably a week if you were to go to the isolated native communities up the coast and as far as Peawanuck.

We may not have the numbers but to be able to do the work will take an increasing amount of time. Even with cybernetics and all your gadgets and everything, I think politics in a real sense is the human contact between member and constituent and you're going to lose that by these extended ridings.

Mr Bisson: Yes, and I think one of the things that the members need to hear from the government side is that we've been very lucky in our ridings, in that we've had good representation both from Mr Ferrier when he was the member for this riding and Mr Pope, who was a Conservative, and hopefully myself. People have taken their jobs seriously and tried to keep in touch with their constituents. I guess we look at this as saying you're taking the MPP away from the public to a certain extent by making the ridings larger because it will become more difficult for us to keep up the relationships we had with the communities within our riding.

The last question, very quickly — you touched on this in your presentation and I guess I ask you it as a rhetorical question: How do you see eliminating ridings, or eliminating the number of MPPs, as a way of augmenting democracy? You talked about that in your brief, how what the government is doing is a takeaway from democracy. The government is saying, and I've heard the Premier say this in the Legislature, that by removing MPPs we're going to augment democracy. How do square that?

Mr Ferrier: Well, you can't augment democracy by taking away MPPs in this region because we have a hard time as it is, with the 15 we have, in being heard and having our needs addressed. When you take away a third of that voice, even though it is a smaller Legislature, our needs are going to be less heard. So I see democracy being diminished, not enhanced, by this.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): Thank you for your presentation. Just to look at the legislative changes that are in place: the southwest's seats, for example, are going to go from 18 to 14; west-central Ontario, which is Kitchener-Golden Horseshoe, the seats are going to be reduced from 22 to 17; Metropolitan Toronto is going to be reduced from 30 seats to 22; Toronto suburbs, which is Halton-Peel and York-Durham, are going to be increased from 18 to 19; east-central, which is Simcoe county and Kingston, is going to be reduced from 13 seats to 10 seats; the east is going to be reduced from 14 seats to 11; and the north seats are going to be reduced from 15 to 10.

With respect to the hearings, as you're probably aware, there were federal hearings with respect to these boundaries which were put in place by the federal commission, and I believe they were over a seven-month period and I

believe that all the northern members who were federal MPs voted for these changes and supported them.

I have one of the largest ridings in the province and I have to run my office with two offices. It's not easy, but I can say this: As a newly elected member, I ran on a promise. I feel that my own integrity is at stake in terms of saying I ran and we're going to reduce the numbers, but also I feel, being down there, that with the less number of members, I'm going to have a greater voice in terms of dealing with the bureaucracy because I've got less members to compete with, 27 less members in fact. I feel I'll be able to represent my membership better.

I know that when you were in office, 1967, there were 117 members and I can certainly tell you with the increased numbers, I think even you yourself would probably find that more members to compete with is obviously less time to deal with that bureaucracy. I sort of consider myself as a watchdog on that bureaucracy, and if I've got less members trying to take up their time and I can focus on them, I feel I can do a better job. Now, I'll just pass it along.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Just one comment before I pass it on as well. I'd like, for the record, for you to know that of the seven government people here, four of us represent rural ridings. So it's not the big, urban city of Toronto coming up here and trying to bulldoze, as we've heard so far this morning. We are rural and urban ridings, and I'd just like to make that clear.

Mr Ferrier: Could I just ask you, are you happy to see your influence as rural members diminished like this?

Mr Stewart: I don't think we are. I think what we have to do is find better ways and more effective ways to service the people we represent. I represent 100,000 people and I represent them, I feel, pretty well. In fact, if we can get out of here, I've got two dos on tonight back in the riding and I will be there, but I've got to find better ways and more efficient ways to do it, and that's what has got us in this problem. We're hearing that today you've got to go from Timmins up to the farthest point in your riding and then come back. Tomorrow you've got to go back up. The next day you've got to go back up. That's not the way you do business any more.

Mr Ferrier: I didn't say that.

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Mr Stewart: No, no, I appreciate that, sir, but that's what is coming out. We have —

Mr Bisson: We don't dictate the issues.

The Acting Chair: Mr Bisson, please.

Mr Stewart: I have the floor. What I'm saying, sir, and I'm not trying to be critical, is that we have to find, within our own constituencies, better ways of doing it and more effective and indeed more efficient.

Mr Gilchrist: This will just take 30 seconds. Mr Ferrier, I appreciate your comments. It was barely a dozen years before you were first elected that there were virtually identical numbers of MPs and MPPs. You're a bit older than I am. Would you suggest that we didn't have democracy and we didn't have a voice from the north in the mid-1950s?

Mr Ferrier: Well, there was a lot smaller population then.

Mr Gilchrist: But relative. Everything is relative. If we reduce the south and we reduce the north — you'd have to agree with me that it's the relative weight of the voices down at Queen's Park. Did we not have democracy? Did you not have a voice from northern Ontario?

Mr Ferrier: I don't think we were satisfied with the voice that we had. I think when they moved from 117 to 130 and there were the 15 that it was a more effective voice. Mind you, if you were to have a cabinet minister from one of the northern ridings — René Brunelle and Leo Bernier, who were both cabinet ministers in my day, serviced large ridings. But if you double the size of those ridings, I don't know how they'd ever combine being a cabinet minister and an MPP who could see their people. It really boggles the mind as to —

Mr Gilchrist: I think that applies to cabinet ministers everywhere in the province. But thank you.

Mr Ramsay: Bill, thank you very much for the presentation. It's very nice to have a person here who has the experience of knowing what it's like to do the job as an MPP and, as Gilles Bisson said earlier, you did a very good job for the people of Cochrane South.

You made the point, and I'd like to emphasize it as one thing that really sort of sticks in my craw, that the Harris government is allowing the federal government to dictate how the people of Ontario are to be represented in its own Legislature. I really think that's wrong. Regardless of who is in office in Ottawa or who was on that commission, the federal government made a decision based on building a federal Parliament to represent Canadians from coast to coast. I don't question their decision and the makeup that they chose. That's fine. They increased seats in this province and that's fine. They try every 10 years, based on the census, to find a balance, and that's their process.

As you know, being a past member provincially, the issues are very different federally and provincially and the concerns of the population are very different as it looks towards its federal government and its provincial government. Federal politics is very different. A lot of it has to do with our military, foreign affairs, Criminal Code, things that, while obviously extremely important areas of concern, aren't top of mind with average Canadians. As you know, and the provincial members around this table know, and my federal member has said and agrees with me, provincial politics is more in the bread-and-butter issues of roads, schools, hospitals, hydro, Workers' Compensation Board. I'm sure this is bringing back to you all the files that you worked on. It's a very different job. I was wondering if you could elaborate on that and maybe give us a sense of the type of things you dealt with in the past, those types of issues, and why you have to be so close to the people you represent.

Mr Ferrier: We didn't have the backup support that you have now.

Mr Ramsay: Too true.

Mr Ferrier: But I did deal with many compensation, social service questions. I even dealt with a lot of federal issues too, but needs that people had, and they are more pressing at the provincial level than at the federal level. There are more provincial ones.

As you said, I don't know that the provincial needs should be governed by the makeup of the House of

Commons, which tries to balance the whole of Canada, governed by how they set up their representation. I don't think the two really are parallel or coincide. I think they're different and should be different because of the areas you mention and the things that I had to do in my day. I'm sure you members have those kinds of questions too, whatever it is, agriculture or transportation or compensation or social welfare.

No matter what party you are, you have to serve your constituents and you have to try to meet their needs or resolve their problems and see that they get justice from government, and there are a far greater number of needs at the provincial level than there are at the federal level, from my experience.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Reverend Ferrier, for coming in and presenting your views today.

Our next deputant is Ms Bonnie Foster. Is Ms Foster here?

Mr Bisson: Mr Chair, if I may, the representative from the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, is here and didn't know that he had to ask for standing before the committee prior to the committee being here. With the permission —

The Acting Chair: Was that Councillor Moody?

Mr Bisson: Not Moody: Councillor Mike Doody. He has asked if he could present on behalf of the North Eastern Ontario Municipal Association.

The Acting Chair: What I had thought about, and we'll have to play it by ear, is if there is a vacancy open and somebody doesn't come, we can possibly consider slotting them in at that point. But right now we're going to stick to our agenda as is. If we get ahead a little, we could consider later in the day for Councillor Doody, but that's the best I can do.

TIMMINS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Acting Chair: Ms Foster, you have 20 minutes in which to make your views known. You can use up the whole time or, if it's shorter, then we'll have some questions for you.

Ms Bonnie Foster: I probably won't use the full 20 minutes. Just to let you know, I'm coming down with the flu, so the shorter the better for me.

My name is Bonnie Foster. I'm the president of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. Just to preface this, the chamber of commerce here represents approximately 450 businesses in the city of Timmins.

The first point I'd like to make is that since notice of Bill 81 first became public, the chamber did not receive any complaints about it whatsoever, either from its members, the residents or any other parties. So from that we can draw the conclusion that, generally, the members are satisfied with the proposed changes. Had there been any serious problems, we would have been notified immediately.

The business community supports these cost-saving measures proposed by the present government and urges continued progress in reducing government spending. All too often, this sentiment is expressed, but when a change occurs which directly affects someone, they are the first to say, "Not in our backyard." The Timmins business community realizes that some compromises are necessary

and we feel that these compromises can be accommodated.

We feel it's a logical step to organize the ridings such that the federal and provincial borders are the same. We feel that residents can better understand who is representing them at the appropriate government level. In this day of partnerships and shared responsibilities, maintaining identical ridings will permit residents and communities to be better equipped to arrange and discuss concerted efforts. Parliamentary representatives will also be able to work more efficiently with their counterparts.

There's no disputing that the size of the Timmins-James Bay riding is extremely large and will be difficult to represent. Travel throughout the riding will also be difficult. However, communications have developed such that residents can readily know what Parliament is doing. We feel that communications from Parliament down to the residents are well handled by the media. The difficulty may be from the residents up to their member of Parliament. With television, radio and newspapers, plenty of information is being distributed and is easily obtained. If a resident requires to speak with the MPP, it is likely that those communication lines begin with a written request or a telephone call. It is not as important for the MPP to be in a certain office at a certain time on certain days as it is to be accessible for communication by any other means.

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However, a word of caution is necessary here. While communications have improved significantly, government cannot assume that all taxpayers have access to all means. There are many areas in this riding which do not have Internet or modem access because the infrastructure is not in place. Telephone service in remote areas is lacking in new technology. It's as simple as a touch-tone telephone. There are places that don't have it. If you call down to a certain place and you get the message, "Press 1 for this; press 2 for that," you cannot get through. So we can't make the assumption that everybody has access to those things.

Also, because of the large territory, certain allowances must be permitted to allow the MPP to adequately communicate to the riding taxpayers whenever necessary. This may mean extra time to allow for turnaround on things, if access is necessary, to go to the specific location and get back.

Upon discussion of the proposed riding changes, one concern raised by some was the location of the boundaries themselves. Communities which have natural linkages between them either because of economic similarities or preferences or easier transportation routes may be better represented if they were in the same riding. Accordingly, it will be important to monitor the effect of the changes when implemented and to realize that further changes may be warranted should the population shift or other changes occur.

Generally, we're suggesting that this shouldn't be etched in stone forever. We have to look at the changes that are happening in the economy and in population and everything.

I thank you for your time. If there are any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

The Acting Chair: We have about 15 minutes, so we'll put five to each side, starting with the government.

Mr Stewart: Just one comment. We've heard from two speakers before that such-and-such an area doesn't want to be associated with another area. Maybe by putting some of the groups together and changing the boundaries, this is going to help to solve some of the compatibility or the controversy, if that's what it is, between communities.

Ms Foster: I think it's possible. I think what might be happening is that a certain community, let's say, that is a mining community that is not in the Timmins-James Bay riding may feel they don't have that same kind of backing behind them that mining is important in their riding. So they might be looking to say, "Let's get into a riding in which mining is important and we'll have that support."

Mr Stewart: It may be a turf war that has been created.

Ms Foster: I don't think that's what it is. I think they're looking to see what benefits we can get from this.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I just wanted to follow up on that line of questioning. When the federal electoral commission went around and heard from different people in communities such as this, for example, I'll read to you directly from their publication: "Several municipalities expressed fear that their interests would not be properly represented," and I'm speaking about North Bay-Timiskaming district. "For this reason, while considering transportation links and communities of interest, most of the Timiskaming area is kept together," and population is added to the south.

If I read through most of this, it says that they followed through and changed the boundaries because of what they heard from the public. So I think they've tried to accommodate as best they could communities of interest in special geographic areas.

I'd like to ask you one other thing, though. We've heard a lot from the people of the north of how different people in the north are. I come from Hamilton. Right now we're going through a restructuring which includes six different municipalities, each of whom believe they are completely different from people who reside in Hamilton. I'm speaking about the areas of Dundas, Ancaster, Glanbrook, Stoney Creek and Flamborough. They're all different. They all have unique community interests.

So it's well and good to say that up in the north they're all different and they're all unique, but we in the south also are unique and different. But somehow everybody comes together and works together to solve their problems, and I believe that can happen in the north. Do you believe that as well?

Ms Foster: Absolutely. That's why it's important that you're looking at all the different interests and the reasons behind certain people's perspective. As long as you're looking at this in a concerted effort, there should be no problem. Northerners will say we're different than southerners. I think probably it's because of the location, and from that respect we will always say we're different.

The Acting Chair: Mr Hardeman, one minute.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you for the presentation. Again, I want to deal with the differences in people as

opposed to the similarities in people. We've heard from quite a number of deputations for the last couple of days that the people in the north are different than the people in the south —

Mr Len Wood: Just look at us.

Mr Hardeman: — and that's what I say as I look across the table; the difference doesn't seem to be very obvious physically. I just wondered if the people in the different communities in the north are different in policy as northerners, or are they actually individually different? Are the needs of the individual in a community different from one community to another? When we have a problem with government, when we call a constituency office about a social services problem, is that a different problem in different communities?

Ms Foster: I don't think it's the individual that's different. I think their circumstances may be different. They will be farther removed from the parliamentary seats; their distances, their climate. Those are the circumstances around them that are different. It's not the individual.

Mr Ramsay: Just a minute ago, my colleague asked a few questions. I'd like to answer that a little bit as to why we are different. I find in dealing with my constituents that there's a sense of isolation there, whether it's real or not, because of the physical distance from Toronto. What I find when I talk to some of my southern colleagues is their constituents tend to pick up the phone and call directly from the blue pages government offices that may be in the Golden Horseshoe area. I find that in the north we get more of our constituents calling us because we don't have all the offices in our ridings and they find it easier to facilitate their complaint through the MPP's office.

The other thing, whether it's right or wrong, is that unfortunately I find, proportionately, that northern Ontarians from time to time can become more dependent upon government. I have about a 30% unemployment rate in my riding, so unfortunately many of my constituents are dependent upon government assistance, and we tend because of that to have a lot of interaction with our constituents.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Thank you, Mr Chair. Ms Foster, I think you have delivered the essence of what the bill is trying to do in your brief presentation, but you have also said that the chamber seems to be happy with the proposed legislation because you didn't receive any complaints or whatever. From whom did you expect some complaints or some concerns?

Ms Foster: Maybe this is a northerner trait, but if anyone has a complaint, they're going to talk to everyone about it, whether it's the business people, whether it's residents, organizations. They would be the first to jump up —

Mr Sergio: How long did you know about this?

Ms Foster: You have me on that. I'm not sure. It's been a while that we have heard about it. The first time I don't recall.

Mr Sergio: I see. So you think that people up north, especially those who are mostly affected, had plenty of time, plenty of notice?

Ms Foster: Yes, I think so. People who are interested in certain affairs make it their business to look into it and to find out what's happening.

Mr Sergio: You have also delivered a word of warning in your presentation as well. You said, sort of, beware. While you may have some support for the proposed legislation, you also said that to represent some of the larger ridings may be indeed very difficult, and then you added that with all of that, we have television, we have radios, we have the Internet, we have computers. Then again you have said that some of those communities don't have all of that either.

Ms Foster: That's right. I'm saying we don't live in a perfect world, and we can't expect that.

Mr Sergio: So are we moving very slowly to de-represent certain areas or are we moving into the technical age and letting the technical age take over the personal representation that the people should have, that they should be entitled to get from the government and from their local member?

Ms Foster: I don't think you can let the technical edge take over. I think you have to work with it, and it's much easier if you can be working with technology if it's available to everybody.

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Mr Sergio: I'm trying to find from you perhaps the happy medium that says, "No, we cannot let a 1-800 number satisfy my needs up here, the northern needs." I understand we have different needs, different requests, but we seem to be moving into, "You have a problem? Call a 1-800 number," for family support and whatever, stuff like that. We are diminishing the various offices of assistance. Do you really think that less means more, means better representation, more efficiency? Do you really believe those large ridings that will see a diminished representation will indeed receive the same or better, more effective representation and we should be doing something about that? You still feel happy with it?

Ms Foster: I'm still happy with it. Can I say that if there are 1-800 numbers, it means there are services being provided by those agencies or whoever is at the end of the phone. In instances where there is no agency, they don't know the right place to go, that's when they will call their MPP and say: "I have a problem. How do I deal with it?" You may not be the one to deal with it, but you may be the one to say: "This particular agency deals with that problem. I'll get you in touch with them."

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, Bonnie, for having come here on behalf of the chamber. I've got to say we somewhat agree in regard to some of the stuff you have in your presentation. I think where we disagree is that I, like you, want to see the government find ways of making things happen in a more efficient way, and if that means to say there's going to be a change to the ridings, I don't have a problem with that overall. But I do have a problem with the mechanism and how this is going to work. I think you speak to that inside this brief by passing through it, and I'd like to get into some of it.

I just want to explain something for the members of the government to understand. The city of Timmins in itself doesn't have a huge problem in the end under redistribution, because more than likely the member will come from Timmins. But that is the problem with the legislation.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Just let me explain. If you went to ask the chamber of commerce president in Kapuskasing, you asked them in Cochrane or you asked them in Iroquois Falls or you asked them in Hearst, I think you would get a very, very different view of what redistribution means, because from Bonnie's perspective and for the business community and people living in the city of Timmins, no matter what happens under redistribution, if the member is elected from Cochrane North or the member is elected from Cochrane South, more than likely the constituency office will be located in Timmins. Timmins will have access to the provincial member. So that's not as far in front of the concern of people. But for the communities on the outside, and I think that's what Bonnie starts to speak to, it becomes a problem.

I want to get to that point, because you talked about it through your boundaries. As an example, in our riding under Cochrane South now we have Iroquois Falls, Matheson and Timmins, and there are synergies between those communities and how they relate to the city of Timmins, because we are the regional centre when it comes to both commerce and government. Taking Iroquois Falls and Cochrane and Matheson and lumping them into the riding of Mr Ramsay, which will be I guess Cochrane-Timiskaming, there is no connection. Iroquois Falls is as connected to Kirkland Lake as Toronto is connected to Vancouver. It's not because people don't like each other or they fight; it's because people don't go that way, everything comes this way. I think that's what Bonnie is trying to speak to.

I guess the question I have of you is, if we agree that there needs to be some kind of change in regard to the amount of people to represent the Parliament of Ontario, do you think we'd be better served by trying to find a way of drawing up the boundaries in some way such that those synergies are allowed to happen?

Ms Foster: Yes, you want to get those synergies if you can. However, I can't see having it done twice. To be really honest, if we can be represented federally in a certain area, provincially it should be the same. I think it's as important, if not more important, that the representative from the two levels of government be looking after the same individuals.

Mr Bisson: Where I have a problem is that the chamber of commerce presented to the federal committee when the boundaries were being changed for the new federal riding of Timmins-James Bay, and it was opposed then to the federal changes. The chamber went before the federal commission on boundary changes and said, "Listen, we're concerned about the synergies."

I agree with you. I think that's a real problem and I would be looking for some support because I know that's where the chamber was when the federal boundaries were being changed. You had concerns about: What happens to Iroquois Falls? What happens to Matheson? What happens to Cochrane? I had hoped you'd assist me as your provincial member so that I can properly represent the views of the chamber and speak on that issue.

I, like you, don't have a problem with the reduction of ridings. That's not the issue as far as I'm concerned. The issue to me is how we draw up the boundaries so they make sense, so that the people living within the ridings

are able to access government through their provincial member. I'm looking for your support as a chamber of commerce to help me in your position that you took with the federal government when it comes to those boundary changes. Can I have it?

Ms Foster: Probably not.

Mr Bisson: All right.

Ms Foster: Times change.

Mr Bisson: Okay. That's fair.

Ms Foster: Right now, granted again, it's not going to be perfect. Whatever boundaries come up will not be perfect. Everyone won't be happy. But again, making them the same, I think, will be —

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Bisson.

Mr Bisson: Okay. Just one —

The Acting Chair: Thank you. Merci, Monsieur Bisson.

Mr Bisson: I wanted to say something complimentary about the chamber. It's not often I get to say nice things to the chamber of commerce. I just want to say that it's too bad, but the chamber's position originally I think is the right direction. I hope we can find some way of being able to bring that message to Queen's Park so those synergies can happen, and I will be looking for your support, albeit you didn't give it to me this morning.

Ms Foster: Again, we're saying these can't be etched in stone. As things change, the world changes, and we have to look at global as opposed to each individual community.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Ms Foster, for coming and representing your views through the chamber of commerce today. I hope also that this theme you've brought up — it was brought up in Dryden — about the touch-tone phones and the lack of accessibility, perhaps the chambers could take that up with Bell Canada to see if that's a technical infrastructure problem.

Mr Bisson: There's no Bell Canada in the north.

The Acting Chair: Not up here. The other utilities, telephone companies.

Ms Foster: We are working on those things, yes.

RENÉ FONTAINE

Le Président suppléant : Monsieur René Piché — Monsieur Fontaine. Bienvenue, Monsieur Fontaine.

Interjections.

Mr René Fontaine: He was always mixing up the persons, all the ridings, in Cochrane North.

Le Président suppléant : Vous pouvez utiliser 20 minutes pour votre présentation.

Mr Fontaine: No. My French people don't understand, and even my English. I'll try English.

The Acting Chair: You have 20 minutes, and you can use it any way you want.

Mr Fontaine: Can I ask a question? First of all, I want to know, where are you all from on your side? Are you from Toronto or from Hamilton? I don't know.

Mr Tascona: I'm from Barrie.

Mr Stewart: Peterborough.

Mrs Ross: Hamilton.

Mr Hardeman: Oxford.

Mr Gilchrist: Scarborough.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): Hastings-Peterborough: two counties, very rural.

The Acting Chair: Etobicoke.

Mr Fontaine: So most of you have a good sleep at your house every night.

Interjection: No.

Mr Fontaine: How come? It's only an hour. Maybe that's where we should cut some expenditure. Instead of renting a room in Toronto, they should travel, and us, we should be there. Bound to come.

I'm from Cochrane North. I was a minister that you are talking about, who arrived home at 3 o'clock in the morning when the airplane didn't fly — take a taxi from Timmins or Sudbury, leave in the morning at 6 o'clock to go to Cochrane once a month. If I'm here today — my wife is very sick but she said, "You go" — it's to tell you people that what you want to do is inhuman for a man, married and with children. Me, my children were older. It's inhuman.

It took me three and a half hours this morning. I could have left last night. I left today just to prove to you, when I left Hearst at 6 o'clock, I was in Cochrane at 9 o'clock. I heard the presentation of the chamber of commerce. I don't agree with Bonnie because in Timmins, they got it all. They got everything. It's like Sudbury. Those big centres are always there. But us, the small centres, where are we going to go? I don't understand at all why Cochrane and Iroquois Falls, Matheson, are pushed on the other one when all our lives those ridings exist in this province in the north where Cochrane was always with us.

I didn't agree with the feds. At first they put Hearst with French River. Our small villages in the riding of Cochrane are — we never mention the native people or the first nations. Today, the people don't want to see us at election time any more. I organized elections in 1952 as a young man. Okay, I'm a Liberal, but still I was a very good friend of Monsieur Brunelle. I made one promise at my election and he told me after, "René, you're going to regret it." It was to go to Smooth Rock Falls and Cochrane once a month, which I didn't miss too much.

Today, again, with the new rules of this government — I'm not blaming you. The MTO, they don't clean the roads any more. It took me an hour between here and — 16 kilometres.

1020

Why we sit in the spring and why we sit in the fall: It was respect for the northerners and the farmers. I made a study in 1987. If we separated northern Ontario — and maybe that's going to happen too, that's not over yet — we could be the fifth-largest province in population and the fourth in GNP. Before the advent of the auto pact, where did the money come from, where was Bay Street born? It was born with our money here, the resources and the agriculture and the tourism. That's before the auto pact.

I'm 63 years old. I go back to 1934. Before, they always respected the north. That's why we came with the ridings that we've got today. Like Mr Ferrier said, I don't care what people say, if you lose MPPs, I don't care which colour they are, it's power that we lose. We lose

power in cabinet. With Frost or Robarts, there were always three or four MPPs from the north who were in the cabinet. And I was there. I've got nothing against the south, I've got nothing against Toronto, but it's a big fight just to win our share of the distribution of the money. At that time our population was 11.5 million, at that time when they gave you \$2 billion for your GO trains and all this. I said, "What about my share for the north?" My share was supposed to be about \$175 million, which I got after fighting.

I don't understand that. I don't understand it at all, because federal is federal. They've got to deal with, what? My own member, Mr Habel, sat with Hepburn from 1934 to 1948. He lost two years because it was a minority government and he lost to CCF. He came back. Then he went federally. In 1968, I was supposed to run during Trudeaumania. I could have won the riding with Trudeau in, probably one speech and that was all. Mr Habel brought me to his house — I had five kids at that time, I was a businessman in Hearst — and he told me, "René, don't go federally." I was the mayor of the town of Hearst for 17 years. He said, "If you want to go into politics, you go provincially because you're closer to your people." And I did that. I could have got the other one on a platter. I won the election, but still it was a hard-fought battle.

But I'm telling you, this kind of redistribution for northern Ontario or rural areas is not fair, because you cannot represent the people. Three hours and a half from Hearst to here, and like Monsieur Bisson said, the office will be in Timmins. Timmins is all right. Me, I don't care. I understand, all the offices over here now. In the old days the government was always in every village with the MTO or the MNR. Now you're closing all offices, closing the welfare in Hearst. It's going to be run by the town, but we ran it before, in the 1960s. Then who's going to get all the work?

I asked this morning how much it costs if I take the plane from Hearst to here: \$200. If I want to go to Toronto, \$900-and-something if I decide to go because of urgency. Yesterday I was with my wife with cancer at Thunder Bay. I drove over there this morning. I wake up and I ask her — "You go."

I came over here just to tell you it's inhuman for this riding, the way it's going to be. Inhuman. Immoral on top of that. I'm telling you, a young MPP with family, she won't survive. It'll be a divorce. We don't sleep at home every night, and we've got a hard time to sleep home on the weekend when we come because on the way through from Cochrane to Smooth Rock to Kap I had to stop in Val Rita for a 50th anniversary. Came home on Saturday night all the time at 12. Leave the next afternoon because I have to go the plane. Sometimes I had to go Red Lake or Pickle Lake and back to Toronto for a vote on Bill 8 or Bill 31. I did it to the detriment of family, which were older, and my wife. The way they're going to arrange this thing today, that's going to happen all over the place.

The people today they want to see the MPP. Don't come any more at election time. With that riding you're going to put, how can we see the people at least once a week or once or twice a month? Go and see the natives today. The first thing they ask you — first of all, to go

on their reserve, if the chief doesn't want to see you, you don't go in. But they're going to see you. And if you're coming only at election time, he's going to say no.

It costs \$8,000 today to go to the north of my riding; it was \$5,000 before. It's \$8,000, and two and a half or three days if it doesn't snow. If you get caught over there, then you spend the whole week over there.

I'm telling you, it's definitely wrong, because we're losing power. I don't understand how a young MPP or any MPP can survive doing that. On top of that, if he's a minister, that's the end of his life; he's going to be dead after six years. That's why I left, in a way. I'm telling you, let's be reasonable.

The promises on that one — I believe you on the other things — but this one, first of all, the people who wrote that didn't look at the map like the feds did. They didn't look. When you wrote that book there, the redistribution wasn't even there yet, because they were working on the Mulroney one, which was scrapped, and the other one was not even finished. We went for a few revisions. But it's not right. It's not right for a representative, because we've got to spend the week in Toronto; we cannot go home on Wednesday. When we come up here, we've got to do the riding, three and a half to four hours over here and 15 hours over there. I don't understand it at all.

I'm begging you to look into this seriously, because northern Ontario is the bread and butter for the south. I'm a chamber of commerce president. I don't agree with Timmins, and a small community won't agree. We are French.

I'm going to tell you a story before I finish. I don't know if you still remember what they called Bill 17, which was to stop something. But when they woke up in Toronto one time after they'd built the railway between North Bay and Cochrane, they found out there was a whole community of French people from Quebec which had their own schools and their own things. That's why they had Bill 17, but it was never passed.

We're dealing with small communities, isolation. Somebody said, "Well, we're still isolated." You go to the north, but you get the news from the west. Am I right or wrong? You don't get the news from Toronto. We tried to change that. We put in a satellite when I was there, a very small community. We brought TVOntario down to the small community and tried to get Toronto news. They don't get that. It's a big difference.

A law was passed that cabinet had to meet with the northwest chamber of commerce every year. What did they do that for? Isolation. The more you change like that in northern Ontario by closing the offices — okay, we accept that. We'll say, "Well, Timmins gets it all." But the MP will have a job to do. If it's not there, I take the car. I just put some gas in, \$47; when I go back home, \$47. If I take the plane, \$200. If I take the bus, it's a four-hour drive.

We're human too, you know. We were born and raised — it's enough with the weather, but we've got to pay higher taxes, more for education. My children have got to stay at the university. Higher this, higher that, plus the heat and plus the roads that are not plowed any more. Imagine that. How can we travel on Saturday to meet with the MPP? If he's right, probably it will be from Timmins.

If we go that route, some day you're going to pay the price for it, I'm telling you. Remember Deibel. They need 5,000 names, you know, to start the ball rolling. At least the government at that time saw the light. They opened the Northern Affairs office and it came as a ministry to be closer to the people. Now, Toronto, it's \$1,000 to go by plane, plus \$150 for a room.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Fontaine. We have some questions for you. Six minutes, two minutes each.

Mr Ramsay: Welcome, René. It's very nice to see you again. I wish you well with everything. I thank you very much for bringing the point forward about the inhumanity of the workload. It's not something I, as the sitting member, can do. It would certainly be used against me in the next campaign against my opponents if I say it would be impossible to represent the riding that I've been given, so I can't say that. But you're right; I don't think people appreciate the time away from home and family that we have. But we don't complain about that because we volunteer for this job. We're proud and honoured to have this responsibility and we do it, but this is going to make it tougher. A lot of my constituents say, "How are you going to do this?"

1030

I think the second question that's there of course is, they sort of know that I'm not going to be in Kirkland Lake and New Liskeard as often, or down at Temagami, because I am going to have to go all the way down to Noelville and through Sturgeon and all the way up through Cochrane. So instead of a riding being about 180 miles long, it's going to be over 400 miles long and it is going to be difficult. It will mean that I won't be in touch as much.

I think you bring the point that, yes, we have this high-tech world, the cybernetic world, but I think a lot of people like a little bit of high-touch in there. I think they look towards their politicians as one of the last vestiges where there's some direct contact with a human being instead of picking up the phone, calling the Ontario government and being in voice mail hell: press 1, press 2, press 3, press 4.

When I'm at a 50th anniversary party, people just come up to me — and sometimes they apologize. I say, "No, that's why I'm here; I'm here so I can hear what's on your mind and what's going on because that what allows me to do a job." So, you're right; in a high-tech world there's still need for being one-on-one with the constituent and finding out what they feel and how their life is. I appreciate your bringing that forward today.

Mr Bisson: I am going to give the time to Len, but I just want to say to René, on behalf of my family, I want to thank you for speaking from the heart, because those are some of the issues that we're afraid to talk about as elected representatives of the Legislature. Thank you.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you very much, René, and thank you for giving me your spot when you decided to retire from politics. It does take its toll. I agree with you.

I just wanted to go back a little bit. You were saying that you're here today speaking from experience, 17 years as mayor. You're also the president of the chamber of

commerce and you disagree with the fewer politicians legislation, which is contrary to the other president of the chamber of commerce who came before you. You also served six years as the provincial member of Parliament and you're speaking from the heart.

I can relate, having an ill wife and having her at Thunder Bay and then having to go back to Hearst, and then dedicated to coming in here this morning to try to encourage some common sense in the Conservative caucus, because they can block any amendments that we bring forward. We don't have the numbers. I congratulate you for coming forward and trying to get the Conservative caucus to listen to your very emotional plea that this doesn't make any sense — scrap this bill and do something that does make sense for northern Ontario — and the fear that you brought up that northern Ontario will become a separate province in the very near future if this attack on northern Ontario continues through everything.

I agree with you on the roads. They are treacherous. We never saw this two years ago, under any other government, what we saw this morning.

Mr Bisson: That's absolutely true.

Mr Len Wood: They're saying there's no money for sand or salt and people are being put at risk, myself included, coming in from Highway 11 over here this morning. Fifteen hours after a storm is finished, there's no sand and salt out there. Why? People can't understand that. They say, "Well, Palladini's cut all the budgets and everything is frozen and you can't do anything."

I don't really have a question for you because you've covered all of the angles. You're saying that the decisions that are being made are going to put constituents farther away from the politicians. There's going to be very little contact. It's going to be hard on the members to cover the areas. If you want to make some comments on that, René, I'll give you time. Thank you.

Mr Fontaine: I'd like to say about the feds: Compare your salary with those of the federal MPs. Maybe they could cover a little bit more. Hell of a difference in salary.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Fontaine. I'm intrigued at Mr Wood's comments. The people from this community and from south of here that we had breakfast with this morning said that the four-laning of the highways, not just around here but North Bay south to Toronto — in many ways the highways have never been in such good shape. I can't speak to the weather in any one year but we'll look forward to this year.

Mr Len Wood: You're not out on the roads.

Interjections.

The Acting Chair: Mr Bisson, Mr Wood, please. Mr Gilchrist has the floor.

Mr Len Wood: It's very unfair of him, Mr Chairman.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Fontaine, when you were first elected, the population of Ontario was 4.6 million and we had literally almost the same number of MPs and MPPs. There were 85 MPs and 90 MPPs. As a minister you would have had a particularly difficult burden obviously; the perspective of trying to represent and take on ministerial duties.

The question I have for you is, since then, since 1952, population in the north has only grown by just over

200,000; the population in the rest of Ontario has grown by 5.2 million. I ask you this with the greatest of sincerity, sir, because it's all very well and good to talk about the loss of democratic rights, but where are the rights of the 5.2 million other Ontarians, recognizing that this isn't a county government or a city government we're talking about but a provincial government? When we reduce the north by five, but we reduce the south by 22, and their population has doubled in the time period since you were first elected, how is that being unfair to the north? Given your experience in caucus, wouldn't that give more time to each member in the limited time that's available in every caucus meeting each week to articulate the views of your constituents?

Mr Fontaine: First of all, if you go back, in the old days too the south was always more people than northern Ontario.

Mr Gilchrist: Only about 200,000 more, spread over 10 ridings.

Mr Fontaine: But you've got to look — spread over 10 ridings, but we're not second-class citizens either.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm not suggesting that. I'm asking, how do we balance the responsibilities with the south?

Mr Fontaine: Balance? If you reduce the MPPs, you reduce cabinet, and that's where the power is.

Mr Gilchrist: We did.

Mr Fontaine: We were at 20.

Mr Gilchrist: That's what we have, sir. We have the smallest cabinet since 1956.

Mr Fontaine: Fewer MPPs — because Mr Harris is not God; he won't sit there all the time. I don't say that Parry Sound is northern Ontario. I put it in northern Ontario, but still. So when you lose MPPs, you lose the chance to get a fair balance in cabinet too. And then you've got to look at the way northern Ontario is structured. There is a whole population that we never talk about — the first nations. Who's going to represent them? If I were you, maybe I'd give them two ridings.

Mr Gilchrist: Let me ask you this. Two days ago in Dryden, we heard from Mr Miclash. He didn't even visit those communities until after he was elected. What kind of representation is that, if you don't even go up during the election campaign?

Mr Fontaine: It's 10,000 bucks to go and visit with them.

Mr Gilchrist: But, Mr Fontaine, we're trying to understand, because on the one hand they keep throwing out those communities as somehow being part of their workload, and yet in the next minute they admit that they never go there.

Mr Len Wood: Give your head a shake.

Mr Gilchrist: It's on the record, Mr Wood.

Interjections.

Mr Fontaine: I'm not talking about Miclash. I'm telling you —

Interjection.

Mr Fontaine: Never mind.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Fontaine, for coming and making an impassioned and humanistic presentation today.

Mr Fontaine: First of all, okay, you grow, but look where the money comes from too.

TOWN OF HEARST VILLE DE HEARST

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is the acting mayor of the town of Hearst, Mr Gratton. You have 20 minutes, Mr Gratton, to make your views known. You can use the whole time yourself, or we can have some questions after you've finished.

Mr Donald Gratton : As you've probably remarked, my presentation is going to be in French and English, and I will answer the questions in French, please.

Bonjour, mesdames et messieurs. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Je suis ici pour représenter la communauté de Hearst à titre de maire suppléant. Les changements drastiques des limites territoriales au niveau du comté de Cochrane-Nord créent une expansion fort significative dans notre circonscription, et cela inclurait aussi une ville de la grosseur de Timmins. Je dois avouer et je souligne avec trois traits que ça inquiète sérieusement les citoyens dans notre région.

The existing Cochrane North riding is already one of the largest in Ontario and covers more land than several provinces of this country, states in the US, and countries all over the world. To further expand the geographic limit is compounding the challenge of political representation for northern Ontario at Queen's Park.

Travel is a factor of great significance, particularly in light of the harsh climate that is a threat for half of the year here. The transportation modes are questionable, with the air service that has fallen by over 50% in flights with the disbanding of norOntair and the frequent cancellation of flights. Further, the passenger rail service is progressively coming to an end while the highway infrastructure — and then I can underline "tree line" in red — is deteriorating at a fast pace.

1040

Le peuple du nord de l'Ontario est surtout éparpillé et isolé dans des communautés sur une vaste étendue de forêt. Évidemment il y a plusieurs centres plus majeurs, tels North Bay, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins et Sault-Sainte-Marie. Mais encore là les distances de l'un à l'autre sont très élevées. À titre d'exemple j'ai dû voyager hier, parce que j'ai couché ici à Timmins hier soir, au-delà de 300 kilomètres sur une période de plus de trois heures pour me rendre ici. Je n'ai pas pris ma voiture. J'ai pris l'autobus parce que je ne croyais pas que les routes seraient en bonne condition, à voir la température qu'il faisait avant que je parte. C'est clair. Finalement, me voilà.

En contraste, vous retrouverez dans le sud de l'Ontario une population concentrée surtout près des villes en général. Ces grandes villes sont l'une près de l'autre. Dans le comté de Cochrane-Nord, il ne faut pas se le cacher, il y a un lien naturel et commun qui traditionnellement existait entre les communautés anglophones, autochtones et francophones et qui engendrait des besoins spéciaux dans cette circonscription.

Si je fais la remarque, qui n'est pas nécessairement dans le texte, c'est que si vous voulez aller à Hearst, à Kapuskasing ou à Cochrane, même à Smooth Rock Falls, il y a bien des maisons d'affaires qui annoncent en français, en anglais et en langue Cree-Ojibway. C'est un

fait. Je veux dire que c'est réel ici. À Hearst on a le Nord-Aski Economic Development Corp qui regroupe les trois nations.

Les consultations étaient toujours très productives pour la mise en place de services d'une bonne qualité pour la vie des résidents. Timmins est un centre urbain majeur, mais il a très peu en commun avec les relations, disons, des municipalités vraiment rurales.

The disparities: In addition to the isolation and distance, northern Ontario is several steps behind in financial resources, technology and employment. It's not in the text, but in Hearst the range is over 10% officially; unofficially it's over 15%. The range of quality of services is also very inferior. Therefore, quality of life and poverty are without doubt constraints that we must alleviate, and the need of direct and effective political representation at Queen's Park is critical to do so.

These differences and disparities are indeed more widespread, and the requirement of an MPP who is available and has time to act and respond for his constituents is of paramount importance for effective representation. Distances in a riding of the magnitude proposed for Timmins-James Bay will be devastating to an MPP and his constituents. One can only expect very infrequent visits of perhaps once every two years, which prevents a segment of taxpayers from this province being heard at Queen's Park.

To maintain regular and ongoing contacts with residents, organizations, entrepreneurs and municipalities would evidently be an inhuman task that would take its toll rather quickly. The opportunity for election to a party would also be very unlikely for a candidate who is coming from a smaller community within the Timmins-James Bay riding, since the power will always remain at the same place, like Timmins.

Le comté de Cochrane-Nord existe depuis au-delà de 100 ans et les différences dans les populations sont autant significatives aujourd'hui que lors de sa création il y a pas loin de 100 ans. Les mêmes raisons qui justifiaient pour la province de l'Ontario la division présente des circonscriptions du nord de l'Ontario s'appliquent encore aujourd'hui, à savoir les distances, l'isolation, les niveaux de population, la vaste étendue des territoires et les régions sauvages.

It's not in the text, but I should say that if we create a larger riding, the isolation will be further resented over here. Prince Edward Island has a population lower than the Sudbury region, yet is recognized as a province and has strong representation at the Parliament of Canada. The loss of five ridings in northern Ontario, bringing representation to only 10, is preposterous and bears no logic at all.

The residents of northern Ontario are being choked and treated as second-class citizens. That's the way we feel right now. The voice of the north is being gagged and our interests and needs will over time be ignored. We are people who live under different conditions, who have a different culture because of those conditions and whose needs are certainly not the same. We do not feel understood, and the elimination of five ridings and the expansion of the territory of ridings such as the proposed

Timmins-James Bay are counterproductive for the north but could be very advantageous for the south.

The Acting Chair: Monsieur Gratton, we have nine minutes for questions, three minutes each, starting with the NDP this round.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you very much, Donald, for coming forward with your presentation. I just want to cover one area and then my colleague Mr Bisson will take over. I can vouch for the previous presenter as well as yourself that the roads are in terrible condition. The money is not being spent on filling up the potholes. This time of year, hours and hours are wasted before they decide to come out and spend some money on plowing and sanding and salting, and it's putting people at risk.

You're saying that people are being treated as second-class citizens. I can vouch for that, because I've talked to a lot of people from the town of Hearst and the different areas. They agree wholeheartedly with that. They're saying that by eliminating one riding out of northeastern Ontario, it's a shame on Mike Harris. He claims to be from northern Ontario and he's going to have a voice for the north. He's just eliminating that voice and trying to choke and throttle all of the good things out of northern Ontario. We've had nothing in the last 18 months from there. I'll leave it to M. Bisson.

M. Bisson : On n'a pas beaucoup de temps, donc je vais demander la question de façon bien brute, bien claire. Le problème que nous allons avoir, c'est que ça va devenir un comté de Timmins jusqu'à Hearst. Si le député est élu dans la partie du nord, mettons que le député vient de Hearst ou de Timmins, où va être le bureau du député ? Comme un résident de la partie nord ou centre, franchement, du beau comté, comment est-ce qu'on se retrouve là-dedans ? Qu'est-ce vous auriez à dire au gouvernement qui dit qu'il va faire un gros comté avec ça ?

M. Gratton : Comme je disais tout à l'heure, si jamais ça se concrétise, l'isolation que l'on ressent présentement va être amplifiée davantage, et ce n'est pas juste à Hearst ; c'est à Kapuskasing, à Val Rita, à Moonbeam, à Calstock. Une chose qu'il ne faut pas oublier dans ce comté-ci, c'est que Cochrane-Nord est vraiment l'extrême nord au niveau géographique : le nord réel de la région de Parry Sound qui est au nord de Toronto ; le moyen nord qui est Manitoulin et toute cette région-là, Sudbury et Timmins ; et le grand nord, soit tout ce qui est au-delà de la «Highway 11».

Notre particularité à nous qu'il faut que l'on comprenne, géographiquement, culturellement parler, je l'ai soulevée dans notre bref : c'est les basses-terres de la baie James et de la baie Hudson. C'est ça qui est notre particularité et notre chez-nous. Notre contact n'est pas nord-sud ; notre contact est est-ouest du long de la route 11. On a plus de contact avec Thunder Bay qu'on en a avec Toronto. Il faut le comprendre. C'est réel. On le vit à tous les jours.

M. Bisson : Vous avez soulevé la question des trois peuples dans votre présentation et vous avez parlé de l'ouvrage de Nord-Aski à Hearst avec les autochtones, les francophones et les anglophones. Est-ce qu'une affaire qu'on doit regarder comme solution, c'est possiblement donner un ou deux sièges au grand nord, de la baie James

jusqu'à la baie Hudson pour les groupes autochtones, et le nord-ouest de l'Ontario ? Est-ce que c'est quelque chose que vous favorisez ?

1050

M. Gratton : Personnellement, je pense que ce serait tout simplement une question de justice, de faire une représentation adéquate au peuple autochtone. Je pense que ça a été soulevé même du temps de M. Fontaine, même du temps de M. Brunelle. Ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui que ça se vit.

J'ai travaillé comme adjoint politique pour M. Fontaine du temps qu'il était ministre. On a fait des voyages à Winisk, à Attawapiskat, à ces coins-là. Ces gens ont une culture vraiment spéciale, particulière. Eux aussi devraient avoir droit aux chapitres.

Pour les gens du nord de Kenora c'est la même chose. Je verrais très bien que tout ce qui est au nord de Kenora et de Cochrane, c'est-à-dire Moosonee en montant vers l'arctique, on devrait faire deux comtés pour ces gens-là.

Le Président suppléant : Monsieur Stewart, une question ?

Mr Stewart: Yes, I have. What's the population of Hearst?

Mr Gratton: The population of the town of Hearst is about 6,000 people.

Mr Stewart: How many elected officials would you have there?

Mr Gratton: As a town, we've got the mayor plus six councillors: seven people in all.

Mr Stewart: You have seven, and then you have other elected officials, whether it be utilities or school boards or whatever.

Mr Gratton: We've got the school board. We've got also the public utility and things like that.

Mr Stewart: The reason I'm asking, and I'm going to put you on the spot, is that when I was warden of Peterborough county, I used to do a speech, and in that speech I used to suggest, and I think I'm low, that there were 24,000 politicians in Canada. I'm looking at seven politicians for 6,000 people. If we went along with the same ratio, in this riding alone we're probably going to have about 10 to 12 MPPs to get the same type of representation. Do you not think that also is a bit over-governed, that we have to make changes and do things a little more efficiently and a little better? You've got one politician for every 800 people. Isn't that a bit too much?

M. Gratton : Si j'ai bien compris, non, je ne propose pas nécessairement un politicien pour 800 personnes. Ce n'est pas ce que j'ai mentionné. Pour répondre à votre question quand même, à savoir si on ne devrait pas avoir moins de personnes élues, il y a peut-être possibilité de faire les choses différemment, d'accord, mais je pense qu'ici ce n'est pas nécessairement d'avoir un certain nom, X. C'est vraiment pour tenir compte d'une culture, d'une région particulière. Ce n'est pas la question de dire qu'on en a 15 et qu'on va tomber à 10 ou quoi que ce soit. C'est vraiment tenir compte d'une population, d'une géographie particulière qui fait que ces gens d'ici sont vraiment des nordiques. On pense vraiment d'une façon spéciale.

Mr Ramsay: Thank you very much for your presentation. I'd like to elaborate on some of the points that were

made in this presentation because I think they're very, very important and they have application to southern Ontario also. But these changes have made a profound difference in the balance of the representation between rural and urban in northern Ontario, where primarily the changes in the south have still kept fairly distinct the urban and the rural areas.

What has happened in northern Ontario is that we now have, and you made the point very well, that Timmins, as the major urban centre in this part of northeastern Ontario, will dominate the new riding of Timmins-James Bay. That will be a change. In the old system, Timmins, by and large, with two other smaller municipalities, was a riding. As Mr Bisson has said, the orientation even in those two smaller communities was with Timmins, so basically having a member from Timmins was quite satisfactory for this riding.

In your riding of Cochrane North as it sits today, you're fairly well balanced, with a number of communities along the Highway 11 corridor, a fairly balanced and equal population with very similar interests. They're pulp towns and there's a bit of agriculture there for sure. Now the real danger is, as Mr Bisson and you have possibly predicted, it could be that in this particular riding it will be the advantage of a Timmins representative of whatever party that could get elected over, say, somebody coming from Hearst or Val Rita, one of the smaller communities. Obviously those city issues are going to dominate the attention of that member, and because the member probably won't come from here, it's going to be harder to get to those communities.

I think that's a point the members should understand, that the mix here has been changed between rural and urban. What you're doing now is giving greater influence to the urban centre over the rural parts of this riding. I would just like to ask you, as I conclude, what effect you think that's going to have on representation to people in Hearst if you end up with a representative from the city of Timmins.

M. Gratton : C'est sûr et certain que pour communiquer, disons, avec ce représentant en question, comme je disais tout à l'heure, il y a une question de distance qu'il va falloir qu'on fasse. On n'a pas le choix. C'est la réalité géographique, la chose.

L'autre chose c'est que, étant donné ces deux codes complètement différents, nous autres on vient d'avoir le 911 à Hearst. À Timmins c'est quand même depuis un certain nombre d'années, et on vient d'arriver à ce point-là. C'est tout des petits problèmes qu'on «deal» avec à Hearst, Val Rita ou Harty : des problèmes dessous, des problèmes des goûts de base. Ici on n'a pas ce genre de trucs-là.

Les problèmes qu'on vit réellement chez nous se retrouvent dans des petites communautés rurales isolées qui ne se retrouvent pas ici. Il va falloir qu'on fasse valoir notre point à chaque fois, à chaque fois, tandis que présentement on va voir que ce soit M. Wood, que ce soit M. Fontaine, que c'était M. Brunelle ; on allait le voir, on s'assit avec, il savait de quoi on parlait. Il savait que c'était les «statutes labour boards», les «boards» locaux puis ces trucs-là. On vit avec ça chez nous. Vous ne vivez pas avec ça dans le sud et vous vivez très peu avec ça dans ce coin ici. C'est la réalité de la vie.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Gratton, pour votre présentation et pour votre perspective réaliste.

ROB SAUNDERS

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Mr Rob Saunders. You have 20 minutes, Mr Saunders, that you can use any way you want.

Mr Rob Saunders: The first thing I want to point out to most of you here is that when I actually was given a phone call on Thursday about this committee being here and when my time slot was, it was suggested to me that my presentation should be 10 minutes, and I'll have 10 minutes for questions or comments is what seems to be the case. However, I want to reiterate what the Chair has said. I think a lot of you people, especially the government side, should do a little more listening to what actually concerns people in northern Ontario. I've been here for a while and listened to some of the questions, and some of them are quite irrelevant. To be blunt, they're very irrelevant as to what's actually taking place in the north. I've heard all kinds of numbers and figures. I can quote you numbers and figures as well, which I will do, by the way.

Just to point out, I'm originally from southern Ontario, which is where everybody on the government side is from. I'm originally from a riding which was the second largest by population in the province in the last few elections, Markham. It is and always has been a Conservative riding. The fact that that riding, which had the second highest population, has a totally different perspective on the MPP and the representation that they receive there from being in northern Ontario.

Being in northern Ontario, not many of you can realize, and being here for a day you will not realize, the changes and the differences there are. After being here for over six years, I know there are substantial differences in attitudes, outlooks, education, health and everything else across the board. You also get a lot more colds, which is what I'm trying to get through here.

1100

The people in northern Ontario utilize their MPP, their representative, a lot more. There's no doubt about that, and I would argue with anybody who would contravene that issue. People in the north know their MPP, they want to see their MPP, they want to see their representative. It's hands-on. I've heard the technical revolution and getting into the Internet and all the rest of it. That might apply and may be very well and good in southern Ontario. I've heard some of your ministers actually make the comment, "Pick up a cell phone when you're on the highway." We all know that was a very foolish statement. If you understand the north — these are things that you won't know unless you've been here, and whatever your briefing notes say is not the case. The satellite systems up here for cell networks aren't that far. If you have a cell system, you can only go 10 miles from here. That's how far it's going to reach, and it won't pick up again until you get into Kap or North Bay.

The ridings are vastly different from southern Ontario. A 1-800 number? That might be great. What do you do when a lot of the communities don't have phones? There's air time on these things, on cell phones. Some of

the communities that are now going to be — I'm talking in particular about this riding, Timmins-James Bay. They only have satellite phones. Satellite phones are very expensive. Whether it's a 1-800 number or not, you're still paying for the air time. They need to see, they want to see and they expect to see the member there.

Part of the reason they need to see these MPPs is because we have far fewer resources here. When I'm in southern Ontario, in the GTA and anywhere around there, I can go right to Queen's Park; I can go right to the ministries. In northern Ontario, if you want to go to the MNDM and you're in Cochrane or Matheson, you've got to drive to Timmins. You've all seen the weather we have outside. That's nothing; that's absolutely nothing. That is a major snowfall outside for Toronto, and I know what I'm talking about because I've been there and I've lived there most of my life. Some of you come from outside ridings. You may see a little more snow in the Peterborough area. I have family there as well. I know that area. But they don't get anything to the extreme that we get here in the north. The resources just aren't there.

The members are expected to be at functions. The only way they can actually come in contact — I've heard Mr Ramsay talk about 50th wedding anniversaries. Well, that's a time that you utilize as a member to come in contact with as many people as you can, similar to a wedding when your family gets together. It's the only time you get together and the only time you'll ever get a chance to see them.

The government is proposing reducing northern representation by 33%. That's a figure that there is no doubt about: five of 15, 33%. Like I said, I can quote you all kinds of numbers and go around the board and what numbers mean, but we all know that figures can lie and liars can figure and you can make heads or tails of whatever numbers you want.

I've heard it said that we're removing five from the north and we're also removing 20 from the south. Well, if you do the math on that, it's still less than 20% that they're removing from the south and they're removing still 33% from the north. So that argument doesn't float very well with me.

Perhaps in drawing up the boundaries whoever actually looked at it should realize that southern Ontario on the map is on one scale and when you flip it over and you see northern Ontario, it's on a different scale. It all fits on the same sheet of paper but it's on a far different scale.

The number I heard was 200,000 in growth in the last 10 years. Let me explain that this geographic area has not changed. Northern Ontario encompasses — a number off the top of my head would be at least two thirds of the province of Ontario, yet we're going to be represented by 10 members, which is 10%.

Mr Len Wood: It's 85%

Mr Saunders: It's 85%? Well, since I've been in northern Ontario, I actually don't qualify North Bay any longer as being north. The last member spoke about, what is north? When I lived in Markham I thought Barrie was north. I can assure you that most of you cannot grasp what actually is being dealt with in northern Ontario.

For the first three years, I used to think, "What are these people griping about?" Until you start driving the roads — and I heard Mr Fontaine say that. I had to go

and do a presentation in Sault Ste Marie, and from here to Cochrane — now, this was three weeks ago. We had beautiful weather in southern Ontario. I know that. It took me four and a half hours to drive 200 kilometres. Like you said, there are a lot of other issues that come up. If I had gotten stranded, guess what? My cell phone didn't work. So we are facing a lot of different problems.

The other thing I heard was that four-laning has never been better. I don't know who you had breakfast with, sir. I don't know how you got here, either, but I can assure you that you didn't drive, because we don't have four lanes from here to North Bay, in the north. From North Bay down, from Mike's riding and down, you may have some four-laning, and it's not all the way down. The roads are great through there and I drive that stretch quite often. I also drive farther north. If you ever take what's called the shortcut from here to go to Cochrane or Kapuskasing or farther north, if you don't get hit by a moose or you don't run into a moose on the road — it's a scary thought. The roads are not as good. It's not to knock anybody on that issue; I don't want to belittle anybody on that issue, but we do have far different needs.

Accessibility: This new riding will be far too inaccessible for the majority of the people in this riding of Timmins-James Bay. You cannot expect somebody from the farthest northern remote area of this riding, Peawanuck or farther north, to take over 10 hours to get to an appointment with you. I can assure you that nobody in your riding would have to take 10 hours to get to an appointment to meet you in your office.

That comes to the next point of reducing the size of the budgets of the MPPs. That's been done. You're going to now make one riding out of what was two, that was staffed by two MPPs and six, maybe seven, staff in total.

Mr Bisson: Two ridings, it would be about two and a half each.

Mr Saunders: You're going to limit that to one member and two staff. Unless you propose, with making it one member, to increase their budget by more than double just so people can receive some form of access to the members, increasing their 1-800 lines and everything else to their offices — you guys all have global budgets now. You have to increase that just so that people have accessibility to the members, and I just cannot see that being done. Because this riding will be losing one seat and a voice, I would hope that it would be considered to increase their budgets for accessibility. I understand that this is as far north as you're going in your hearings.

The Acting Chair: At this point.

Mr Saunders: At this point, which would lead me to infer that there may more hearings, I would hope, with the people who are more concerned farther north? Now I see their heads shaking no.

Mr Len Wood: They said no.

Mr Saunders: I'm somebody who's not going to be as affected by these changes, which has already been pointed out, because I live in the greater area of this new riding of Timmins; Timmins will be the hub. But I can assure you, I've got family in Kapuskasing and farther north, in Hearst and other areas. If you drive to Hearst — I would just urge you after this, if you think it's such an easy riding to manage, and I'm sure you've got all kinds of tips on how to manage this riding, just try and service

it. You can't. You cannot with the budgets that have been allocated. The resources just aren't there.

The one road that takes you from here to all those points farther north — there are tractor-trailer spills, there are accidents on the road. That gets shut down. What are you stuck with? You're stuck staying over, and with all the other points that Mr Fontaine brought up about inaccessibility to your family and everything else, the stresses on it, it will make it an inhuman and unmanageable riding. Now, I can say that. I'm not a representative. I know none of you would actually want to say that, for the points you've mentioned.

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I still can't fully comprehend the reasons you're redrawing the maps the way they are, and most of the people I've heard present before me can't grasp the thought or have no idea why, so I'd be looking for some insight into why you wanted to do that.

Here are some of the arguments that have been put out there. "We're redrawing the map to reflect the federal boundaries so that people have one common boundary and they're not perhaps in two." Pardon me, but I'm not that stupid. I know if I'm in one riding or if I'm in another. The people in the north know if they're in one riding or the other. In the north people are in contact and they know; it's a small-town mentality. Once again, I lived in Toronto for many years, and most of you will know you can go years without even knowing who your neighbours are. Up here, people know, and they aren't that stupid.

That may work in southern Ontario, from North Bay down. Leave the north alone then. We only have 15 members in the north, none of whom are Tories. I fully understand that, and that might be some of the reasoning behind it, and then you can shift the burden to the reason that "We're trying to follow the feds." Now, the feds are not without —

Mr Len Wood: That's Mike's story.

Mr Saunders: Like I said, I don't qualify Mike as being in the north, only from North Bay. When you say you're going down south, people in Timmins say, "Oh, are you going to Sudbury or North Bay?" That's considered down south. I consider it Toronto, but that's what most people's attitudes are. A four-hour drive doesn't qualify very much. I mean, four hours from Toronto and you're south of Ohio.

This new riding, all the facts and figures are there: It's bigger than 40 countries in the world; it's bigger than a lot of provinces in Canada; it's bigger than 40 of the US states out of 50, all the rest of those things. But the fact is, it doesn't matter what anybody else does. This is us up here that you're dealing with. These are our lives you're affecting. These are people who, for various reasons, are in the north. If anybody else tells you differently, we're the hub of the economy of Toronto. That's already been stated. For every one job that's created in the north, four are created in the south — those aren't my figures; StatsCan released those figures — through mining and all the rest of the sectors.

The Liberal Party is not without fault in this, federally, and they're going to pay dearly for it, I can assure you. If they're the ones who actually initiated it and you're

riding their coat-tails saying, "We're only following the feds in what they're doing; they see it proper," in fact they're increasing their number of seats in total in Ontario by 4%. That being the case, let's stick with actual numbers here. Like I said, we can go through this: a 4% increase? Why don't you guys increase it by 4%? If that's not the case, leave it alone. You're still ahead of the game by following the feds. You're reducing it by 4% and by not incrementing it.

The Acting Chair: You have three minutes left, Mr Saunders.

Mr Saunders: I'll just leave it at that. Thank you for your time. I look forward to any questions.

The Acting Chair: One minute each to the caucuses, starting with Mr Gilchrist for the government.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Saunders. Obviously, as the campaign manager for Mr Bisson, I would have thought you would have a greater grasp of why we're doing this. It's \$80 million per term of office that we're saving. I would think \$80 million spent on roads or —

Mr Saunders: I would just like to correct you on one thing. I don't know where you got your facts, but I am not a campaign manager for Mr Bisson and I never have been.

Mr Gilchrist: You didn't work in his campaign? Oh, okay.

Mr Saunders: That might be the beginning of false statements that you're going to make.

Mr Gilchrist: Whatever. It's sort of like a four-hour drive from Toronto takes you south of Ohio. A four-hour drive gets you to Windsor, if the roads are good.

Quite frankly, part of the problem we have here is that all of the descriptions we've had of difficulties come from four rural ridings. We're the provincial government. We have a responsibility to pass legislation that is pertinent to all the citizens of this province, obviously, and because this is a democracy, we should be guided by what is in the best interests of the majority. We understand that.

The distinction that has to be made, of course, is that in a civilization such as ours we try and balance the needs of the minority. Everything we've heard here right now and everything we heard in Dryden and the Sault said that there's no problem in Sudbury, North Bay or Thunder Bay. Every one of the major cities in the north, no problem. Sitting members have said that this bill will not affect them in the slightest.

Mr Saunders: Their ridings are not doubling.

Mr Gilchrist: They're all expanding, but they say they have no problem.

Mr Saunders: Doubling?

Mr Gilchrist: So we have four ridings we have to make special allowance for. Obviously, if we don't exactly mirror the federal boundaries, a lot of the savings that could be accomplished by joint enumeration, joint mapping, joint riding names, disappear and we would lose those savings, that \$80 million per term.

My question to you, as someone obviously fluent in the political system, is that particularly when opposition members have less of a need to be at Queen's Park because they don't sit on anywhere near the number of committees, behind-the-scenes committees, why wouldn't,

for those four ridings only, the members simply go to their House leaders and say, "If my territory's increasing from 60% to 80%, I need an extra day in the riding," and instead of four days at Queen's Park where many of them only come for question period for an hour, why not take two days in the riding and three days at Queen's Park?

Mr Len Wood: Mr Chair, I'm sick and tired of listening to the attacks continuously from Gilchrist.

The Acting Chair: Mr Wood, Mr Gilchrist has the floor.

Interjection.

The Acting Chair: Mr Gilchrist has the floor.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm not attacking Mr Saunders. I'm asking a very simple question.

Mr Saunders: I heard the question. Let me answer the first question you have. If you're talking about opposition members not required in the House, I would suggest that you start with your backbenchers, who are far less required in the House, who actually do nothing, who speak up very little. If you want to make some little attacks, I suggest that's where you start to make savings.

The Acting Chair: For the Liberals, Mr Sergio.

Interjections.

Mr Saunders: I've been to the House and seen what takes place and if you wish to continue —

The Acting Chair: Mr Sergio has the floor, thank you, Mr Saunders.

Mr Sergio: That's all right. You have dealt with a number of the concerns we have heard from other presenters as well throughout the hearings. I really have no questions other than just making a statement that I believe there is serious concern up north here, which is quite different from the concern we have in the city of Toronto. I'll be gaining some 25,000 people more, but my riding consists maybe of five square miles. Up north, you are getting a lot more territory.

Do you think that in order to balance the larger territory but more population in Toronto, we should be allocated the resources to serve the needs of those people or that we should really treat representing people with doing more with less? Do you think we can do more with less resources?

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Mr Saunders: To do more with less in terms of actual members? I think it's possible.

Mr Sergio: That seems to be the credo of the government in every area.

Mr Saunders: It's pretty tough. I'm not going to knock the government on every issue, but the fact is, there are ways of making savings out there and we all know it has to be done.

Mr Sergio: Do you feel democracy is worth saving at a low but extra cost?

Mr Saunders: No, I don't think you can make the savings, because here, quite simply, is what's actually taking place. The people who have access and can get the things done that they need to have the money and the power and the resources. As far as I'm concerned, what government ministries are there to help and assist in doing is to make the whole process more accessible to everybody. For example, if somebody needs a birth certificate, if you've got money you can pick up the

phone, call your lawyer, and you get it done, or whatever the case may be. Most people, the majority, the government is not listening to and not being able to deal with in making the changes that affect them the most, the accessibility —

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Sergio. Mr Wood.

Mr Len Wood: Just briefly, the purpose of these hearings and the general government committee going around the province listening to presentations is to bring forward, from the comments, amendments to this particular legislation that they feel is good for all the people in the province. Do you feel there is a listening on the part of the government members to bring forward amendments to this legislation when it goes back to Queen's Park?

Mr Saunders: If you're asking me about what I've just seen in my presentation, all I've seen is them looking through their briefing notes prepared for them by somebody in a think tank down in Queen's Park. It has been pointed out that perhaps I know something about the political process. Yes, I do, and I don't take kindly to being told, "Young man, come down to Toronto and actually see what takes place in the House." That's just ignorance.

Mr Bisson: I just want to say one thing quickly. You said that if we're going to reduce the ridings, we need to look at the MPPs' budgets so you can properly service the constituencies. I think that's something the government needs to hear, because as other presenters have said, larger ridings — it costs 8,000 bucks just to do one trip to go up the coast. We don't have that money as it is, to do it more than once a year. If you're going to increase the riding size, that's one of the things you have to look at.

What's interesting is that the government, as you said, has already reduced the budgets of MPPs, and I understand there are reasons for constraint. But one of the things they've done is cut our communications budgets, and that affects us here in the north as well as in your ridings, so that we have less ability to communicate. I understand that the government House leader would like to reduce our long-distance budgets altogether in next year's fiscal budget, which means that MPP offices in northern Ontario will have to dig into our global budgets to pay long-distance charges, which are probably around 30,000 bucks a year. So don't kid anybody. It means we're going to have less access coming out of northern Ontario into Queen's Park.

I'll give you the last word. Are you opposed altogether to changes?

Mr Saunders: Actually, I'm very open to changes. In reality, I think it needs to be done. In all sincerity, government members — it's hard for me to say this, but you've probably made some good changes.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Saunders, for your views today.

Mr Saunders: Thank you, Mr Chair.

JOHN MURPHY

The Acting Chair: Our next presenter is Mr John Murphy. Welcome, Mr Murphy. We'll see if we can have a productive next 20 minutes. Proceed.

Mr John Murphy: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to start by making an apology. I wasn't too sure of exactly what the act is, the complete name of it, because when I've seen it scroll past on the political channel, it seemed to go on and on forever. I thought maybe Gilles Bisson was speaking in French and we were getting a translation. I can say that. Gilles and I are friends, or political friends. That's about as close as we can get.

I'll try and stick to the script so we get through this within the 20 minutes.

Mr Bisson: It's because you're a red Tory.

Mr Murphy: I don't think anybody's ever accused me of being red.

I'd like to begin by thanking the committee for the opportunity to speak to the Fewer Politicians Act, Bill 81. In the event that there might be any confusion at the end of my presentation about whether it was to critique the act or to support it, may I make it clear at this time that my intent in this presentation is in support of the changes to the electoral system.

My name is John Murphy, and I've been a resident and taxpayer of northern Ontario since my arrival in Chapleau from Ireland in September 1960. I can tell you that was a surprise. I have worked for two railway companies, from Cartier west to Nipigon and from North Bay to Moosonee. I have been a resident of Chapleau, Sultan, Matheson, Timmins, South Porcupine and Moosonee, and I have worked on a relief basis in northern communities too numerous to mention at this time, and in addition, I have owned a summer cottage at Temagami since 1962. I should point out that in the event the committee may think me a nomad, I have worked for the same mining company since 1970 and have been a resident of South Porcupine since 1971.

As a past deputy governor and vice-governor and governor in the Association of Kinsmen Clubs, I have had the opportunity to visit most, if not all, of the communities in northeastern Ontario and indeed most of the communities in southern Ontario. As a former alderman in the city of Timmins and as a candidate in the last federal election, I can assure you that when I say that I have experienced northern Ontario, it has been through being there, and not through a casual visit.

Since my first involvement with Canadian elections in the early 1960s — it was difficult not to get involved; Chapleau was in Algoma East and the candidate was Lester Mike Pearson — it has always been a puzzle to me that federal and provincial riding boundaries differed so greatly and I therefore applaud the move in making them the same.

The members of all parties in the provincial riding of Cochrane South will no doubt share a sense of nostalgia for elections won and campaigns lost within these electoral boundaries, and there is doubtless a sense of loss that in the adoption of new boundaries we will lose the communities of Iroquois Falls and Black River-Matheson from our riding.

It is a bold move at any time to change electoral boundaries, and few committees, if any, have ever escaped without someone trying to hold on to a favourite community of support or a neighbouring location. These

are the ways of politics and politicians, and I know that while you do not have within your power at this time to have influence over the federal electoral districts which are proposed as provincial boundaries, the future will hold a thrust to include the town of Cochrane in the Timmins-James Bay riding. If you look at the map, it just looks like a natural. I know it was probably left in the Timiskaming riding in order to make up the numbers necessary.

I support the government in their adoption of the federal electoral districts which were set by a Liberal government in Ottawa. It takes courage, but it is a fair and equitable manner in which to establish new provincial ridings. It means that this government has not tried to manipulate ridings to gain advantage but rather to use the same ones we use to elect federal members of Parliament. This is being done at a time when the federal districts are being changed, so it gives no advantage to any political party. In addition, it saves millions of taxpayers' dollars normally used for the province to repeat the process and it provides opportunity for savings in the future through pooling resources with the federal government in the production of electoral material.

If there is a major concern about the reduction of the number of politicians at Queen's Park, I have yet to hear it. The response I get from those with whom I have discussed the matter has been that we could use a few less. These are their words, not mine. Experience here in Timmins has shown us that the reduction in the number of politicians is not only possible but that it works. When I moved to South Porcupine in 1971 this area consisted of four municipalities — that is, Timmins, Whitney, Tisdale and Mountjoy — each with its own mayor and council. In 1972, when the city was amalgamated, it became one, with 14 councillors. The city operated in this mode until 1980, at which time it again reduced the number of members of council to eight, where it remains and operates successfully to this day.

Was the transition easy? Not at all. In fact, there are people who maintain that amalgamation has never worked. Some of them may be here today. Has everyone always been happy about the reduced number of politicians? Hardly. As a casualty of the 1980 reduction of council members, I had some doubts as to how well council would function without me, but they have somehow survived and the city thrives today with one mayor and eight council members.

Be assured that there will be predictions of dire happenings because the number of members of provincial Parliament will be reduced from 130 to 103. You will be told that northerners will be underrepresented. I am pleased to note that while representation is based on population, ridings in the north will continue to have smaller populations, for example, 75,000 as compared to 100,000 for ridings in the south. I used wrong figures, because they run, I believe, in the federal electoral districts, from 74,000 to 108,000. This means that northern Ontario has more representation than it would have under a pure representation by population system.

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There will be suggestions that problems will arise because provincial politicians will not be able to serve

their constituents due to the distances involved. It is my belief that the opposite will be the case. In these days of shared costs between the municipal, provincial and federal governments, it is my contention that federal and provincial members, whatever their political persuasion, serving the same constituents and municipalities, will be better able to focus on projects and develop a team with their municipal partners to achieve success. Even in northern Ontario, technological changes have made communications virtually instantaneous. Teleconferencing and videoconferencing are commonplace, and those wishing to provide information can do so via a Web site, fax or e-mail.

To conclude, let me recap the advantages of using the same boundaries for both federal and provincial electoral districts:

(1) It avoids holding a provincial redistribution commission, thereby saving millions of taxpayers' dollars.

(2) It provides an opportunity for future savings by cooperation with Elections Canada, reducing the need for staffing, mapping and enumeration.

(3) It reduces the Legislature by 27 MPPs, saving the taxpayer from paying their salaries, staff and travel expenses.

(4) It ensures that federal and provincial politicians represent exactly the same areas, where communities can easily hold them accountable and promote working together, political parties aside.

(5) It has been proven locally on the municipal scene that reduced numbers of politicians can still operate effectively, even though it means having a larger constituency.

There is little doubt that there are many who do not share my views. I respectfully submit that it was only a few years ago that Ontario had less than 100 provincial ridings, and I am confident that in 1998, when this act takes effect, it will be just as well served by the representatives who are elected to represent the 103 new provincial electoral districts. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Murphy. We have 13 minutes, so we'll divide that time, starting with Mr Ramsay.

Mr Ramsay: Thank you, Mr Murphy, for your presentation. You've heard probably from all of us around this table that we're really not against redistribution. I think the northern members in the opposition are making the point that because of the vast geographical distances in northern Ontario ridings, and because of the disadvantage in the north of not being as hooked up to cyberspace as well as we are in southern Ontario — even though we have two fibre optic lines running through the Highway 11 corridor, we don't have all the on and off ramps yet. Many of the homes that I visit in my riding do not have computers yet, and many are on party lines and don't even have, let alone touch-tone service, single-family residence phone lines. So I think it still is necessary in this part of the world to have more of a hands-on contact with many of our constituents.

Do you see the harm, with this redistribution, of leaving northern Ontario with the same representation so that we would go up somewhat from the 103 that is being proposed to 108? We still would have a reduction of 22 politicians in Ontario.

Mr Murphy: The problem I've always had with the federal and provincial boundaries is the blurring of areas. If you talk to the people who aren't involved in politics — of which there are none here today, I might add. Everybody who is here today — I think the committee outnumbers the number of people we had, when you count staff members and committee members. The actual members of the public who are really interested in being here to talk about this are few and far between. Only the people making presentations and the politicians who have to be here are here.

The blurring of political lines — when you go out into the street and you talk to people, only a few people, who are involved at the core of one political party or another, really know where the boundaries are, the people who have worked in those areas. I see Gilles shaking his head, but I can tell you, travelling back and forth in the riding of Timmins-Chapleau and in Cochrane South and in Cochrane North and in Timiskaming and Nipissing, as I have over the past few years, a lot of people who pay the taxes in Ontario really are not too sure of why the boundaries are the way they are.

That is why I'm saying I applaud this. I definitely think that yes, it will make the MPP's work harder; yes, he will have difficulty getting around, but when you talk about communication, you're talking about a guy who had to learn Morse code telegraph in order to get a job when he came here. We've come a long way.

I disagree with you that the north is far behind people in the move to cyberspace. I think if you look through this community and you look at the number of computer outlets we have and the number of areas that we have to link up with the Internet, we have three or four: We've got ONLink, we've got NTnet, we've got ViaNet, just to mention a few here in the north and in Timmins. There are a lot of people who are heavily involved in the expansion of communication through the north. We in the north often cry poor about our ability to communicate, but I think it is growing much quicker than people realize.

Mr Bisson: I appreciate your coming to this committee and bringing your views. For those of you who may not know John, John has been involved not only at the local level of politics but tried to take a run federally for the PCs in the last federal campaign and has a lot of respect in the community. I want to thank you for coming.

I have to take this opportunity just to make a couple of points. One of the reasons I think we don't have a lot of people here, and I heard it leading up to this hearing — and I don't mean this to be combative — is that a lot of people feel that they cannot affect or influence a Conservative government and say, "Why should I get involved?" I think that's a real problem in a democracy now. Every government has suffered from that and I don't want to be specifically tough on you guys, but I think more so today, for a number of reasons, people are feeling that way. I think we're missing the whole boat when it comes to what we're doing through this bill by just reducing the seats. I think the issue is that we need to reform our system of Parliament so that we move to a system of Parliament that may indeed in the end have fewer seats but that takes a look at how regions are properly represented, number one.

Number two, how do you give voice to the elected representative at Queen's Park so, as one person said before, if you're a backbencher or you're an opposition member, you have more voice at Queen's Park so that you can play a more important role on behalf of your constituents? Maybe we should be looking at what's happened in New Zealand and what's happened in Germany and look at the system of proportional representation, where we're not governed by the tyranny of the majority. In our system of Parliament, if the NDP wins a big majority, we do what we want. If the Conservatives win a big majority, they do what they want. That's what people are really opposed to. I think we're missing the boat. If Harris was as commonsensical as he puts it, we'd be looking at changing Parliament so that it more reflects the needs of the citizens and the citizens feel more connected and more franchised, then, to their government. I think that's the real issue.

Mr Murphy: If I could just respond to that, I really think, though, Gilles, that this move towards adopting the same boundaries is a very real move to that. We can sit down and we can now talk with the federal government about that very thing.

Mr Bisson: I hear what you're saying.

Mr Murphy: Proportional representation for an area —

Mr Bisson: It's not rep by pop I'm talking about here. Proportional representation is totally different. But let me finish the point I want to make and you can comment after. All I'm saying is that we need the reform —

Mr Murphy: I thought you had finished.

Mr Bisson: No.

Mr Murphy: You stopped for a breath.

Mr Bisson: The other thing is that I think in northern Ontario most people on the street know who their federal MP and their provincial MPP are. That's not because we're brighter; it's because we have smaller communities, there is much more connection with people within their ridings. If I go into Cochrane, most people will know their federal and provincial members. If I go into Chapleau, they will know that as well. To say that they don't, I think is a bit irrelevant.

The other thing I want to say just in the last part is when it comes to telecommunications, we might be doing very well in Timmins when it comes to the Internet and when it comes to telecommunications, but move down the road about 30 miles to Shillington. They can't use fax machines; they can't use modems because the phone system will not accept it. We had given money through ONIP when we were in government in order to upgrade that system so that they could move to this technology. Unfortunately, that was one of the things that your government cut. But there are many communities like Shillington across northern Ontario that can't even plug a fax modem into the telephone because it won't work. To simply say that technology will deal with how democracy works better, I think we're kidding ourselves.

I agree with you, John: We need to find ways to make our system of government more effective; we need to make it more efficient. I have absolutely no argument with you, but I think we are totally missing the boat on this bill. We should be talking about reforming Parlia-

ment itself and reforming our system of elections so it makes more sense.

1140

Mr Murphy: Let me correct you on a couple of things. I didn't say that the people in our communities didn't know their representative.

Mr Bisson: Oh, okay.

Mr Murphy: I said they didn't know the riding lines, the boundary lines, and were for a great part unaware of what area it took in. They know that Thalheimer represents here — and that too is questionable — but they don't know that he also represents Wawa and White River and Dubreuilville and Chapleau and those other areas. With the way it will now be, it will make it easier for people to understand the process.

What you're talking about, Shillington not being able to plug in a fax machine, you're probably right. But with ONLink, if they have a computer, they can dial a number locally and they can hook in with a fax modem.

Mr Bisson: No.

Mr Murphy: Yes, they can, absolutely.

Interjection.

Mr Murphy: It is now.

Mr Danford: Thank you, sir, for coming here and sharing your time this morning so that we can have your input as well. First of all, I think it's important to know, as was said earlier here this morning, that many of us here represent rural ridings, so we have a lot more in common with the north and the size of the areas and that sort of thing than some people wish to recognize.

One of your points that has come up here before with other presenters as well as through this conversation is about the areas and how we correspond with the MPs in the ridings. Certainly in my own riding, and I'll use it for a reference, we have three MPs whom I work with representing the same area as I do provincially. Quite frankly, there is confusion in my riding. The public has difficulty trying to relate their issues, who to contact. I know who gets the issues, I guess because we represent the area, and we deal with them that way.

Is it a real concern in this area? I've heard other speakers mention it, and you talked about the areas and the members. How much of a concern is that? I'd like to have it clarified again.

Mr Murphy: Are you talking now about the boundaries?

Mr Danford: The fact that the boundaries would be the same and therefore you'd know exactly who's the MP and who's the MPP.

Mr Murphy: As I said earlier, I don't think it's really much of a concern to the general public; I think it's people with vested interests or people who have been involved with political parties, who are here today, myself included. As Gilles said, I've been a Tory. I've been a Tory since the Timmins-Chapleau riding came into effect. When Ernie White first ran, I ran his nomination. That was, I believe, in 1980. Before that, I voted Liberal. I've been tempted a few times to vote NDP, but I've never succumbed.

Mr Bisson: I'm still working on it.

Mr Murphy: Maybe if I moved to your riding — oh, God, you're a Liberal. I'm sorry.

The Acting Chair: Thank you for coming in today, Mr Murphy, and presenting your views in such a humorous and enlightening way.

Mr Murphy: It's my pleasure.

TAMMY LYNN GOUCH

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant for this session is Tammy Lynn Gouch, who is replacing the mayor for the town of Valley East.

Mr Hardeman: She's not the mayor of Valley East?

The Acting Chair: She could be some day. You never know.

Ms Tammy Lynn Gouch: No, I'm not.

The Acting Chair: Welcome. You have 20 minutes to present your views.

Ms Gouch: Mr Chair, I was wondering if it would be okay to share my time with Mike Doody, who would also like to speak.

The Acting Chair: If that's the will of the committee.

Mr Bisson: Could I suggest, just to be helpful, Mr Chair, I don't think the representative from the United Steelworkers is here. Maybe we can lump it together and put the two of them up and that would work fine. Take a little bit of extra time.

The Acting Chair: Is the rep here for the United Steelworkers? He isn't. Do I have unanimous consent that we have Councillor Doody here? Agreed? Councillor Doody, would you like to come up and represent NOMA?

Mr Tascona: Mr Chairman, you're not making a decision on the USW representative yet?

Mr Bisson: We can come to that when the time comes.

The Acting Chair: No. Maybe somebody could try to find him.

Okay, folks, you have 20 minutes. Split it as you will. If you are brief enough, we can have some questions as well. It's up to you. Proceed.

Ms Gouch: I'm Tammy Gouch. I'm from Iroquois Falls, a small community on the other side of Timmins. I was originally from Matheson. Iroquois Falls has always been a part of Timmins. When you go shopping, you always come to Timmins. When you want to see a specialist or doctors, you have to come to Timmins. Now with the new redistribution of the boundary lines, Iroquois Falls and Matheson are going to be two small communities involved with larger communities like New Liskeard and Kirkland Lake and Cobalt.

I'm worried that Iroquois Falls, Matheson, Raymore, Holtbyre, small communities, are just going to be left out or forgotten or are not going to be paid attention to the way our member pays attention to us now. I'm worried about the one-on-one contact with our MPP, being able to call him during his office hours, being able to talk to him and speak with him, whereas with the redistribution, the MPP that you're going to have in the Timiskaming area is going to be more worried about his constituents either in Kirkland Lake or in New Liskeard. They're going to be missing the one-on-one an awful lot, being in Iroquois Falls or Matheson or Raymore or Holtbyre. That's my major concern, being left out by being from a small community.

The Acting Chair: Councillor Doody, would you like, for the record, to state whom you're representing.

NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

Mr Mike Doody: I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome you all to the city of Timmins. I'm a councillor with the city of Timmins but I am here really as the chair of the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association. To give you an idea of the size of that municipal association, it takes in the boundaries of Moosonee, Moose Factory, over to Hornepayne and the whole district of Cochrane, and Timmins to the south.

I was first elected as a councillor for the old town of Timmins in 1970. I was mayor for two terms, from 1977 to 1980, in the city of Timmins, retired in 1980 and came back in 1985. I'm not enjoying it as much as I used to, being a municipal councillor anywhere in Ontario.

Being a councillor from Timmins, it would have been very easy for me to come here and go along with the status quo — downsizing, rightsizing, politically correct, to say that whenever you're getting smaller we can do it more efficiently. But what price do you put on representation?

If I may say to Ms Ross, she mentioned that in her area in Hamilton, maybe as opposed to another borough close by, that they feel they're different. Let me tell you why we in northern Ontario are different. Let me tell you why. Let's say you knew a former golf pro who lived in North Bay and, for whatever reason, he moved to Toronto. When he was in Toronto they said to him, "Well, we'd like you in the Bay; there's a golf tournament on." He couldn't get a flight, so he drove to North Bay and it took him four hours. When he got to North Bay, they said, "You know, we're not going to play here. The NOGA is being held up in Timmins. We'd like you to go up there and play with some of the pros."

So he drove another four hours to get to Timmins, and when he got to Timmins, they said: "You know, there's a charity pro-am up in Kapuskasing. We'd like you to go there. Do you mind?" He said no, so he drove another hour-and-a-half to get to Kapuskasing, and when he got to Kapuskasing they said, "They're offering a big purse in Thunder Bay. How'd you like to go and play there?" He said, "That sounds good." So he drove for another eight hours.

Reversing that, you could be living where Mr Fontaine said. Let's say you went to the doctor, if you were lucky enough to see a doctor, and they said, "You have a form of cancer but we'd like to be sure. We'd like you to have an MRI," and the only place you could get that is in Toronto. If you're lucky, you either get on the bus and you drive down, but if you could afford it at one time you'd take a short flight, which is not available now, by norOntair from Kapuskasing to Timmins. When you get to Timmins, naturally husband and wife, it's \$1000 return to Toronto. If you couldn't get a place at Princess Margaret next door where they put you up, you'd have to stay in a hotel and pay \$85 a night.

1150

With what Mr Gilchrist said, if there are two million more people who are voters in the GTA or in southern

Ontario, do you really believe, if presented in the right way, that the editorial pages of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Sun* would be upset by saying, "We want these people to be properly represented"? Maybe we have to make eight or 12 more representatives, but at the cost of taking it away from northern Ontario, four fifths of the land mass of the province, the natural resources jewellery box of Ontario?

Do you know that in the district of Cochrane, Moosonee, Moose Factory, population of let's say 200,000, there are two psychiatrists? Two psychiatrists. Let me tell you something else we have to put up with. Some people can't get a doctor. The taxpayers of Ontario are putting these people through university and when they come out they say: "That's an area that's overserved. We'd like you to go to Timmins." I notice when they want to speak, the doctors say, "I don't want to go to Moosonee." Not just Moosonee — Hearst, Kapuskasing, Cochrane, Valley East. That's how we're different.

Did you notice here in Timmins today the pricetag of gas? Did you notice it? It's 65 cents. Go to Hearst where Mr Fontaine lives, 75 cents. To live and work here, to do business costs us more.

Mr Gilchrist, you said the media spews out misinformation. I came here from Val d'Or, northwestern Quebec, in 1959 to work for the Thomson people in radio, then went to television. Let me tell you about television: one television station, a local television station, a private television station covering the largest land mass in the world. What we consider a local story is to go up and cover a story that is happening in Kapuskasing. We send a reporter; it takes him three hours to get up there with all his equipment. Does the story come back. We do all of that to get that one story, a local story, on television. That's what the people of this community have to deal with.

The Acting Chair: Councillor Doody, we have about four minutes.

Mr Doody: I appreciate that. I have attended but I just want you to know also something else. It's easy for people to say municipal councillors, members of Parliament, don't work hard, and it's easy for editorials to say that because you're in public life those people should be diminished, we shouldn't pay them the going rate.

I'll say one other thing to the difference: I understand that provincial members of Parliament, no matter who you represent, we understand the work they do and they truly are the people who are close to the people, next to the municipal councillors. Federal members of Parliament work on another level. We understand that. We understand that it's the provincial members who come and meet with the councils of the day and help us get through our problems, no matter of what stripe you are.

But let me say this: You can't put a price on representation with what the people think, because in Temagami, when we get the feeling in northern Ontario we've been alienated, that people from the south continue to make legislation and try to tell us what to do, and when they fill an arena and a politician that nobody knows of in Ontario, especially in the south, gets up and all he says is, "Maybe it's time we separated," the people go wild with applause, cheers and whistles.

You may think it's the right thing to do to go the same way with the feds. Listen, if there's more representation needed for these two million people, give it to them. Integrity is what people say they want to see from all politicians. But don't take it away from us, because let me tell you, you're going to chip away at the democratic cradle that's northern Ontario. We are different.

The Acting Chair: Three minutes, one minute for each caucus starting with the NDP.

Mr Len Wood: I know the time is limited, but I just want to put on the record a quotation from the mayor of the town of Cochrane. He's a Conservative by choice, but he said this legislation, the Fewer Politicians Act, does not make any sense. It's a slap in the face for northern Ontario and he's sick and tired of Mike Harris and his cabinet slapping northern Ontario on a regular basis, by the attack on the MNR employees, MTO being shut down and one thing or another. His quotation on this particular piece of legislation was that it's a slap on the face. I just want to know if you want to respond to that.

Mr Doody: There's no doubt probably jobs are tough all over. I have two boys working in Toronto. Both of them happen to be working, by chance, at Richardson Greenshields. They were taken over by Dominion Securities. One was given a handshake, the other one was asked to stay on. In northern Ontario jobs are few and far between.

Let me say something else, if I may, just very quickly. Mr Gilchrist makes a good point and I concur with him that over the last five years — we did a study through the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities — our young people are leaving. They're not coming back. The only municipality in all of northern Ontario that has seen a small increase in its population is here in the city of Timmins, so there is concern. We all want a job. Especially in northern Ontario, they're few and far between. If you don't have one, where you going to go? Whose door are you going to go knocking on?

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Councillor. I appreciate your coming forward. I believe we are sensitive to particularly the geographic issues that face what are proposed to be the four rural ridings. Just for Mr Wood's benefit, because he was not with us in Dryden, not all of the mayors and reeves in the north are —

Mr Len Wood: Excuse, Mr Chair, I was in Dryden.

Mr Gilchrist: Forgive me.

Mr Len Wood: I was in Dryden the full time. I want to correct the record.

Mr Gilchrist: You're right. Sorry, it was Mr Bisson.

The Atikokan reeve, Robert Davidson, supported this bill and said it was time to look at doing things more efficiently, given the current financial climate. I'm sure Mr Wood will remember that presentation. I think it was the first one Thursday morning.

Very simply, I wonder, though, if we can separate representation from the service delivery. You're the first person who has mentioned the health issue, and I'm glad you did because I'm somewhat surprised at the lack of feedback we've had here in the north. We've tried to cobble together a deal that will prompt newly graduating doctors to locate in underserved regions, particularly the north. We came up with a program earlier this year for

70 communities that would guarantee pay up to \$194,000 a year plus a \$25,000 performance bonus if they stayed for three years, and only eight graduating doctors of last year's class of 450 took it.

I think every member on this side agrees with you. We have to deal with the service issue, but I think that's a bit removed from representation. After a year and a half, I believe most people who call our office call on the basis of things in government that went wrong and that if everything was working well we'd have very few people calling on us. If we can solve the health issues, presumably that's going to be that much less work for the members, not just on that side of the House but on this side of the House as well. I appreciate very much your raising that issue here today.

Mr Bisson: How do you think we get the services?

Mr Gilchrist: We don't interrupt you, Gilles.

The Acting Chair: Monsieur Bisson, let's be a little more polite and civil with our guests and pay attention to them. Councillor Doody, would you like to respond very briefly?

Interjection.

The Acting Chair: Monsieur Bisson, please.

Mr Bisson: Watch your gavel.

The Acting Chair: I can buy another one quickly. Lots of wood around.

Mr Doody: I appreciate the comments by Mr Gilchrist. Certainly in Timmins, when there was the talk for a little while of some doctors not taking on any patients, the doctors in the city of Timmins, the Timmins and District Hospital, said for them it would be business as usual. I think that says volumes about how they think.

Mr Ramsay: I'd like to thank you both for your presentation. To Michael first, just to say probably nobody could say it any better. We really appreciate around this table your impassioned plea for northern Ontario.

Tammy, I'd like to say to you that if I am successful in the next election and have the honour of representing you, I will do whatever I can to make sure that Iroquois Falls, Matheson and Cochrane, besides the rest of the riding, gets the proper representation they deserve.

One of the things I want to see happening here, if this bill does go through, is that the MPPs have the proper resources to have a physical presence in all areas of the new riding. I think it's very important that I do my best to have some sort of office in the new north end of the riding. I will certainly endeavour to do that so I can take the time and spend some time in that office and in the neighbourhoods and the communities. It certainly won't be the same. It's going to be a little more challenging, for sure. They won't see me as much in Kirkland Lake and New Liskeard if I'm successful, but all areas of the riding will deserve equal representation. I think that's going to be very important so I'll certainly endeavour to do that.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Councillor Doody, for your very impassioned and enlightened view and your very eloquent stance.

Is Mr Yee here, the Steelworkers gentleman? Okay, we'll try this afternoon. We'll be recessed until 1:05.

The committee recessed from 1205 to 1312.

The Acting Chair: Our first presenter this afternoon is the corporation of the township of Nairn. Would those

folks come forward if they are in the house. Anybody from the corporation of the township of Nairn? No.

JIM THOMSON

The Acting Chair: Then we'll go to Mr Thomson.

Mr Jim Thomson: I'm here today to speak in support of the concept of fewer ridings in Ontario and thereby fewer MPPs and a major savings for the taxpayers of Ontario. When as an immigrant I came to Ontario in 1952, one of the things I first noticed was the large number of MPs and MPPs it took to govern the country and the province of Ontario. I came from Great Britain, which is also a parliamentary democracy but has only one government, the one in Westminster. Considering that there are close to 60 million people in Britain, there is only one cabinet, one education minister and so on.

When I voiced this opinion it was pointed out by a friend that Canada was a much larger country than Britain geographically and that the extra representation was needed. At the time I accepted this rationale as travel was slower and visiting the outposts of a riding was a difficult job. However, much has changed in the means of travel and communication.

A very good example of this is the fact that Laurentian University in Sudbury, which is 300 kilometres from Timmins, put on a course last year leading to a master's degree in business administration. The professor never left Sudbury and the class in this case never left Timmins. The entire course was done by videoconferencing and was a very good example of communication over long distances. I myself took an English class at Laurentian with a professor in Sudbury and the pupils scattered all over the north. This was done by teleconferencing. I was in South Porcupine.

Another good example of this communication I witnessed was in the Timmins and District Hospital where a doctor had a baby diagnosed by someone in Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, all done by television. We were also treated to an example of how something as delicate as fingerprints could be examined over long distances.

So some of the objections I have read in newspapers by the critics of riding redistribution are simply misleading. Indeed, it may be a further saving for the taxpayer if the government would insist on less travel and more communication by MPPs with their constituents using the modern techniques such as those above.

It is worth noting that several other provincial governments are reducing the number of ridings in their provinces. The best example was the recent reduction in representation in Prince Edward Island, all done by a Liberal government then in power. The same reduction is planned by another Liberal government in Newfoundland, perhaps a sign that people are beginning to accept Henry David Thoreau's admonition, "They govern best who govern the least."

We must not lose sight of the fact that riding redistribution was originally the idea of a Liberal government in Ottawa, a decision made after many years of hearings and study. If an MP can represent a riding such as Timmins-James Bay, then why not an MPP? Of course, by copying it the Ontario government is effecting further

savings. We also have the accompanying reduction in support costs of the present system, all of which comes out of the taxpayer's pocket. There have been times over the past 10 years when I've wondered if governments have forgotten that there is only one source of revenue: the taxpayer.

One of the best arguments for riding redistribution is the fact that the reform was in the publication known as the Harris Common Sense Revolution, printed long before the last election was called. The voters of Ontario supported it by electing the Harris government. Since 1984 we have witnessed a succession of governments that have brought the province to the brink of bankruptcy by a series of tax increases and spendthrift ways and seriously crippled Ontario's attractiveness as a good place to do business.

On April 25, 1996, Tony Silipo of the NDP introduced a bill into the Legislature to change the electoral system. Among other things he acknowledged that he would support a reduction in members in the Ontario Legislature. The cynicism noted by Mr Silipo was echoed and confirmed by Mr Bisson, who in the same debate said the following: "All it will do is reduce the number of seats by some 20-odd members, saving you a few bucks." The dictionary defines a cynic as one who believes the worst about people, their motives or outcome of events. If the saving of millions of dollars is a few bucks in the eyes of Mr Bisson, then I am a cynic.

The Acting Chair: We have about 10 minutes for questions, starting with the NDP.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your presentation. As you've probably heard, this is the fifth in public hearings that have been held around the province, in Ottawa, London, Dryden and Sault Ste Marie, and now in Timmins. In some of the presentations, especially as we've been going through the north, has been the concern that the member of provincial Parliament will be farther away from the constituents and it will be more and more difficult to be in personal contact with them if you add on another 25,000 or 30,000 constituents, and extra miles, in the new Timmins-James Bay riding. From one end of the riding to the other is 760 kilometres, I believe.

Even though there are about 10 airports within that riding, there is only a budget at this point in time that would allow for one charter flight into some of the remote communities that don't have water and sewers, don't have telephones. If they have telephones, they are all public telephones. They don't have the technology and they want to have the personal contact.

Nobody has been arguing that there shouldn't be redistribution, but if you're going to do redistribution, make sure there is a proper voice at Queen's Park. One of the arguments that has been made is that if you reduce it by 33% in northern Ontario, whether they be Liberal, Conservative or NDP members who are elected, are they going to be able to bring that voice to Queen's Park and be the watchdog of the bureaucracy and at the same time serve their constituents?

1320

You've covered a lot of area here. In one item you're asking, if the Timmins-James Bay representative at the federal level can do it, why can't the provincial member?

That hasn't been tested yet. I mean, we're only going to have the first election probably next year to see if that federal member is going to be able to get around to those particular areas in a proper fashion, which is going to be a lot different from what it is right now. We haven't experienced any representatives in Ottawa under the new boundaries.

You're saying that it's a Liberal government that introduced the federal changes. From what I understand, it was the Tory government under Brian Mulroney that introduced the federal changes. Then it got stuck in the Senate, and as a result of it being stuck in the Senate the committee went back out again and did some further amendments to it, but that was not completely satisfactory even though they're increasing it by four members. In northern Ontario I don't believe that a lot of the areas are completely satisfied because they're going to have one less voice in Ottawa as a watchdog over what the federal members do.

Once again, I'm pleased to see your presentation come forward. There are different views. One of the reasons for getting the committee to travel around through the province is that we're hoping that all three political parties on the committee will listen to the hearings — people are making presentations — and listen to any amendments that might have to be done, whether it be financial, giving more resources to the local members, or whether it be changing the boundaries slightly, whatever. With that, I'd just like to say thank you for coming forward with your presentation. It's good to hear points from all different sides on this issue.

Mr Thomson: I think that a lot of this is done on trial and error. I was very much involved in some of the hearings that the federal government held on riding redistribution. It was in the mill for a long, long time before it emerged in the form it is today. My point was that in this age of teleconferencing and videoconferencing perhaps governments and MPPs in remote areas like this have to start looking at that as an option. Rather than travelling from here to, let's say, Moosonee, have a central point in Moosonee where you could call a meeting of your constituents in Moosonee. You could remain in Cochrane and do the whole thing by television.

There was a baby in Timmins who was diagnosed by a doctor in Toronto without the doctor leaving the hospital. This is the day of magic communication. Surely this is seriously a way to do it. Rather than the MPP travel all the way to Moosonee every now and again, set up a videoconference.

Mr Len Wood: I respect your view, but as I said in some of my comments, there are a lot of areas in the riding that take their politics more seriously than that and want to have personal contact with their MPP. They're saying, "We don't have telephones; we don't have TVs." There are at least four of my communities that I represent right now that don't have electricity, other than diesel generation. These people want to have contact at least once or twice a year with their MPP and they want to have a voice as to what is being translated back and forth. As I said, it doesn't matter if it's a Liberal government, a Conservative government or an NDP government; they want to have a voice.

Of the three members before me, two of them were Conservative members and one was a Liberal member, and one of them was here today making a presentation this morning, saying that it's something that is very unfair. It's a slap in the face for northern Ontario that any government would consider reducing the representation by 30% in northern Ontario.

Mr Thomson: So you're including the Liberal government in Ottawa on that?

Mr Len Wood: The Liberal government in Ottawa just imposed those boundaries. There were no public hearings after the Liberal government took office. They just imposed them, with the exception of one minor change in a federal riding: They took Elliot Lake out of the area. There were no public hearings on it.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Thomson. I think you're the first person in the five days outside Toronto and one in Toronto, six days of hearings, who's brought a perspective, or at least articulated their views, in the context of other parliamentary democracies. We've heard people suggest many times that the geography is greater than many European countries, leaving aside the fact that many of the countries they cite have populations of 60 million or 70 million people. I hope they really aren't suggesting that the number of representatives you need from 70 million isn't the same as the number you need from 780,000.

A couple of things you've touched on I think really speak to the heart of what representation could and should be. There's no doubt as we look at the numbers. Going back to 1955, for example, there were still 85 MPs and 90 MPPs. Since then, the federal government has increased it to 14; it's proposing to add another four, but it's added 14. The provincial government added 40. Obviously the population increase was exactly the same for both the federal and the provincial members to deal with, but the federal government, obviously handling whatever different tasks it has, has been able to assimilate that increase by adding only 14 more members in all those years. The provincial governments, on the other hand, all three, saw a dramatic increase in the number of representatives.

What we're suggesting now is moving back to something far closer to parity, that in this case identical boundaries is appropriate. One of the reasons you can do that is because of new technology. Would you agree with me that rather than being concerned about or dwelling on the failings of service in the north right now, or anywhere else in Ontario for that matter, we should be looking to address those concerns rather than suggesting that MPPs should not adapt to reflect the changing times?

Mr Thomson: I think they have to adapt. Education has adapted, and I think the example of the master of business administration degree from Laurentian University is a perfect example. The one that I took, an English course, was done by teleconference. There were people in Parry Sound, people in Kirkland Lake, people in Timmins and people in two or three other places, plus a bunch of them in Sudbury, and this was all done by teleconferencing. This is magic.

Mr Gilchrist: It's astounding. I'm sure Mr Wood did not say this intentionally, perhaps he wasn't aware, but

all of the sittings were in fact after the Liberal government was sworn in. They took place in Timmins here, May 4, 1994. That was seven months after the federal election. I'm sure that was an unintentional slip there, Mr Wood.

Mr Thomson: I made a presentation on behalf of the Timmins-Chapleau riding, as it was at the time, in Sudbury. That was just before the election of 1988.

Mr Gilchrist: Oh, the previous one?

Mr Thomson: Yes, 1988.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes, that was the previous redistribution. The most recent one was done in 1994, and the hearings throughout the north took place in early May of that year.

We've heard from many people that the federal boundary commission somehow used different logic as they went through, even though in their mandate — and it's spelled out right in their report here, and I'd be pleased if someone wanted to read it; I know we don't have the time to do it verbatim — they have exactly the same considerations that they have to keep in mind when they cobble together their boundaries.

Would it be likely, if you appeared before a federal boundary commission and a provincial boundary commission, that you would make two different submissions or would you tell them exactly the same thing?

Mr Thomson: Highly unlikely.

Mr Gilchrist: If we were to spend the money on a duplicate provincial boundary commission, we would likely hear exactly the same concerns from exactly the same number of people as the federal boundary commission, and presumably we'd make the same decisions.

Mr Thomson: It's also interesting to note that there is a decline in the population in northeastern Ontario. I can't remember what the numbers are, but it used to be around 100,000. Now it's down somewhere around 93,000 or 94,000 people, so there really is a decline.

Mr Ramsay: Thank you, Mr Thomson, for your presentation. As an MPP for 11½ years, I bring to the job, I suppose, a certain style; it may be unique, it may not. But I don't look at my job as boiling down to just numbers of people I represent but as really trying, when I can — and as I get older, it gets a little harder — to put names to faces and to deal with people in a very personal way. In fact, in many of our ridings the job becomes very personal because of the nature of the problems that many of my constituents have. A lot of my job is not being the legislator at Queen's Park but a mini-Ombudsman in the particular area I represent. Yesterday, for example, I was in my constituency office in Haileybury, one of two that I have, and the nature of some of the cases I handle really requires that sort of personal one-on-one meeting.

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I've been on the teleconferencing link at Northern College because just actually three blocks up from my office is a wonderful teleconferencing centre out of the Haileybury school of mines satellite of Northern College, and it is a wonderful facility. I have communicated with people throughout the Cochrane North area when they wanted to have some information on a course about how the government worked and certainly have used it.

But I find, with the nature of some of the issues I deal with, whether it's a mother coming in because she

doesn't feel the local school board can handle the special education needs of her child or a woman coming in concerned because of the abusive relationship she's been in with her spouse and she finds the services that she requires inadequate in our area, and sometimes people talk about the psychiatric care they've had, that doing this sort of thing over teleconferencing, with technicians in the room or even if there was nobody in the room and absolutely nobody else could hear, there really needs to be, for this sort of work, that sort of human contact.

You gave reference to Great Britain, which has really only one level of government besides the local councils and the 60 million population. I think what we're talking about here in the north, while all of us are not disputing the need for riding realignment, is the density of population. What it requires of us in the north here is to travel, because we don't have a high-density population. Our populations are spread out over great distances and, with these proposed changes, will even be more so.

In this age of high technology and cyberspace, while there are tremendous opportunities to communicate on them, and in fact I have an e-mail address and I do communicate with a few of my constituents through e-mail and have a cell phone and try to update myself and upgrade myself as the technology allows, there's still a need in this job for that sort of personal contact with folks, for them to know they can actually not only talk to in person but reach out and touch their elected official and, through that, feel sure that I've received the message of what they're saying to me.

I don't know how far this is going to go. Maybe some day somebody is going to propose that we no longer have representational democracy and maybe we'll all just stay home and push a button when a vote comes up. Maybe it's going to come to that some day, but I think that'll be sad, because there is something to say about this sort of system, and you can only stretch it to a certain point before it will no longer work.

Mr Thomson: I think you're right, Mr Ramsay, on a few of your points there, that there certainly are individuals who require individual attention, but I think if we don't take a leap forward and try some of these things, we'll find ourselves so far from reality one of these days that we'll never catch up.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Thomson, for your considered presentation.

MARC LACHANCE

The Acting Chair: Is there anybody here from the town of Iroquois Falls? Calling for anybody from the town of Iroquois Falls. Okay, then we'll go on to Monsieur Marc Lachance from Hearst University College.

Mr Marc Lachance: No. I'm just a citizen.

The Acting Chair: Okay. You have 20 minutes to present your views.

Mr Lachance: My name is Marc Lachance. I'm an unemployed worker who's very concerned about the northern riding redistribution. I do not accept the argument that this is necessary to reflect the population shift which has occurred since the last census because it does not take into account the special needs of the north,

which have been clearly expressed by the majority of the people here today.

The population shift from north to south is a symptom of a larger problem, which I see as a vicious circle. It begins with a largely undiversified economy of single-industry communities, which are very vulnerable to the boom-or-bust cycle of the mining and forestry sectors, which leads to an unusually high unemployment rate. In this area the unemployment rate is 15.8%, and that's just the people who qualify to collect unemployment insurance; it doesn't factor in the people who are on social assistance or young graduates who are living at home with their parents. I think if we factor all that in, we'd be at an unemployment rate of over 30%.

This lack of opportunity forces our youth to move south, which is creating what I call "the great northern brain drain," which weakens the north and which is responsible for the population shift. I know personally, because three quarters of my friends don't live up north any more; they live in Ottawa, they live in Toronto. Personally, I moved away for four years and lived in Sarnia, Brantford, Hamilton and Toronto. I moved back because I love the north and hope to be able to continue to live here. Unfortunately, I may be forced to leave my home once again. I have to go where I can find a job.

I have nothing against redrawing the boundaries, but I feel that preserving our northern representation of 15 MPPs at Queen's Park is vital to deal with the real causes of problems in the north and not just the symptoms. With less representation, the MPPs will only be able to fight fires, with no time to establish a long-term strategy to meet our needs.

In conclusion, I just wonder what happened to the promise which was made in 1983 by the Legislature to the boundaries commission, which told them to ensure that representation in the north would not be less than 15 constituencies.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Lachance. I think we have some questions. We start with the government. We have about 15 minutes, if you want to go that long, five each.

Mrs Ross: Marc, thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation. Can I ask you something? We've heard a lot of comments here that northerners want to see their MPP face to face. I'm new at this business, and I have to tell you that I would love to see all of my constituents face to face, but it's almost impossible, even in southern Ontario.

We also hear of the terrible conditions up here with respect to the weather and everything. MPPs are in Toronto from — well, we're sitting now, we'll probably sit through January and into February, we're not quite sure, but then we sit again in March, and we sit till mid-June, and we have the last half of June, all of July, all of August, half of September. Those are months when the weather up here is going to be much better than it is currently, and I think there's lots of opportunity for MPPs in the north to contact people. I need to know, how often do you need to see your MPP face to face?

Mr Lachance: To answer that question, I could speak from personal experience. I've contacted Gilles, my MPP, I'd say about three or four times relating to personal problems, and then another time I was president of a

committee to establish a francophone day care, and in that case it wasn't for me. But I found that an actual meeting face to face regarding the establishment, let's say, of a day care, you would need that contact because it's not just something where it's a problem, let's say, with a government bureaucracy. There were a lot of meetings. Especially up north I find, why should it be that you just contact your MPP when you have a problem? Maybe it's to discuss a good idea that you have or something where you want to know who you could talk to. To me, the technology part is good, it's a tool to help provide better service, but it shouldn't be the only way. We have 15 right now, and that's out of 130. Even if, let's say, they reduce the number to 103 but we could still keep our 15, it's not like we would be overrepresented from a northern perspective, because I think the north has a different view of the south.

When I lived in southern Ontario I lived in four different communities. They were all different, but the geography was so close. To go from Sarnia to Toronto was three hours. For people in Sarnia, that seemed like a long distance, but it was pretty short for me.

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Mrs Ross: I would say, and I'd like to suggest to you, that perhaps someone like you who contacts your MPP as often as you do is rather the exception than the rule if you look at the overall population. For example, before I became involved in political life I never contacted my MPP. I never picked up the phone to contact him. My husband's a local politician, a municipal politician, and he receives far more calls than I do. I've never received a phone call at home in a year and seven months. Even the number of calls that he gets, I still look at it and think that the majority of people, at least 90%, don't contact their politician.

I'll give you an example of one instance. A friend of mine who's a politician was contacted, was tried to be reached for about two weeks by this one particular constituent. I'm not trying to minimize this, I just want to give you a small example. He tried to contact his MPP and couldn't reach him. He didn't want to leave a message other than, "Please have him call me; it's very important." Two weeks later this MPP returned the phone call and apologized: "I couldn't get back to you sooner. What can I help you with?" He wanted some Ontario pins. That was something that a constituent assistant could have handled quite easily.

Mr Lachance: I agree.

Mrs Ross: That's a minimal thing. I realize there are very important concerns that people raise, but oftentimes staff look after the bulk of what comes through my office for sure. Would you suggest that a lot of things you call about could be handled through the staff?

Mr Lachance: I can only speak for myself because I don't know what other people do, but from my personal experience, especially with the day care project, there's no way that project could have gotten off the ground. I had to speak to Gilles, because Gilles was in a position then to speak to the minister responsible for day care. That's just an example of a project. That particular project created six jobs. It's something that contributed to the community.

I'm thinking more of the long term. As opposed to the MPP just being a person who solves little problems, why not have the MPP play a leadership role within a community to get people or groups together to build the economy? To me that would be a very good thing, especially in the north. I find if you reduce it to 10 — it's already hard enough, I'm sure, to do a good job representing all your constituents given the geographical distance, but if it's reduced to 10, they'll have less time to concentrate on the long-term strategies, and they'll have to fight fires, like little things.

The Acting Chair: Mr Stewart, you have one minute.

Mr Stewart: One minute. That's pretty difficult to do.

I guess one of the perceptions is the fact that up here it's great distances and long hours to travel. In the last six weeks, in the riding that I represent, I have been back home three times each week. It's my understanding up here that many of the representatives go down on Monday, or whatever it might be, stay until Thursday, come back and spend the weekend. I drive four hours a day to get home three times a week.

I hear this word "unique." The uniqueness up here in many cases is very similar to down there. Because we're closer, we have to drive home more often. I represent industrial, rural, commercial; I represent the aboriginal community in my area; I represent agriculture; I represent forestry and a big tourist industry. I guess what I'm trying to say is your uniqueness here, I believe, is not a great deal different other than weather. But it doesn't matter whether we make smaller ridings or larger ridings, weather is something we can't control, and thank God we can't, because if we politicians tried that, we'd really screw things up. I'm not trying to be controversial. It's uniqueness here, but the uniqueness is much the same down our way.

Mr Lachance: You would think that, maybe because we're here in Timmins and it seems to be the same as in Peterborough, but I know that they're proposing for Timmins, let's say, to include James Bay. That blows me away, because it doesn't really make any sense. Moosonee — there's not even a road that goes up there. The only way to get up there is either by train — you take the Polar Bear Express — or by plane. Let's say I have to go to Moosonee from Timmins — I've never even been to Moosonee myself and I've lived up north for most of my life.

Mr Stewart: Why wouldn't we do it differently? When you go to Moosonee or when you go to an outlying area, why wouldn't you put on a town hall meeting so you can get a number of the groups in? What I'm saying is, you've got to do something a little different than what we've been doing.

Mr Lachance: If you went to Moosonee today — let's say you took this commission to Moosonee — I think you would see that the people are totally different. The majority are probably aboriginal.

Mr Stewart: I understand that.

Mr Lachance: Their concerns are probably totally different than the concerns, let's say, of the people here in Timmins. I don't think it's so much an issue of the boundaries — for myself, the actual boundaries don't matter — it's the number of representatives at Queen's

Park. Given the north, the land mass we represent, and given also the contribution the north makes to the province's economy, to then say, "You have the voice of 15 people," it doesn't matter the ridings, it doesn't matter if this town is part of this riding or that riding, it's just the number 15, especially since in 1983 it was said, "At least keep 15." If this continues, what I see happening is a population shift. It's a vicious circle. We're going to have less and less population.

Mr Ramsay: Marc, thank you very much for your presentation. I think through your presentation and your answers — and I hope for some of the members who aren't as familiar with the north as others — it's been educational for the members, because there really are a lot of differences, and I'd like to add on to those differences, if I could.

One of the reasons you don't get as many calls in your offices as some rural and northern members might is because we don't have the community services in place that many more built-up areas have. My experience is that in the north constituents rely more on the MPP office as a sort of information centre, to get help on how to access government or community services that might be in place, and that's the first place they tend to go to. Also, I find that because of the lack of and the greater distance from government offices, northerners tend to go to their MPP, whereas if you're in Burlington, you pick up the phone and there are ample offices in the 905 area code and you tend to call just directly yourself to the local government office. So again, I've found for the last 11 years that people tend to call the MPP's office.

The other thing too, and you mentioned it with your attempt to develop a child care centre, is that I find the MPP has a facilitator role in the north. Constituents look to us as social and economic development officers, if you will, especially before there were such programs in place, and probably more so now that the funding has been cut off. They look to us, as leaders in the community, to work with other community leaders, to go to bat for them at Queen's Park, to try to develop services that you, for instance, have identified to your member, Monsieur Bisson. It's almost like a different role.

When some of the other members talk about the travelling, you can get to Peterborough today four-lane all the way. The reason northeastern Ontario has twice the traumatic deaths as the provincial average is that the distance, the weather and the two-lane highway mean, unfortunately, we have twice the death rate on our highways in northeastern Ontario than the provincial average. I wish that weren't the case and I wish I had the answer. I wish I could wave a magic wand and make that disappear. But it can't disappear and I'm afraid it won't disappear overnight, and with the funding restraints that we have, we're not going to be able to readily solve that problem.

We do have other challenges here. I guess what we're saying is that, out of 108 members, if we were to retain our 15 seats, I don't really think that 15 out of 93 seats would be an inordinate amount of representation for 90% of the land mass of this province.

I really welcome your presentation and hope maybe through these hearings and when we get into clause-by-

clause back in Queen's Park, we might be able to convince the government members that while we're not against totally restructuring, we really feel very strongly about northern representation and we'd like to see it retained at 15 seats.

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Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, Marc, for coming forward and giving your presentation. I've got two questions, but first I'd like to apologize for not being here at the beginning. I had to take care of something for a constituent and it ended up taking a little bit longer than I figured, so sorry that I'm a little bit late.

The question I have is in reference to some of the comments that were made by the Conservative members, and it's twofold. The first question is, there's a suggestion that somehow if you make a riding larger — let's say Timmins and everything north up to Attawapiskat — and somehow we're able to accommodate for that as MPPs by having organizations like yours, la garderie Clin d'Oeil, or whatever other organization or group or individual thing you belong to, to coordinate all their events around my schedule, how practical is that from a community perspective?

Mr Lachance: I don't think it would be very practical. I know myself, if I wanted to meet with you, we had to schedule a meeting at least a month in advance, because there were other people you had to talk to. Even Attawapiskat, that's so far up, there's not even a road to go there. I can't see it myself. I couldn't see that it would be a practical thing.

Mr Bisson: But if I were to call you and say, "Listen, I've got a larger riding," and you have an opening, let's say, or you have some sort of a function at Clin d'Oeil, and I was to suggest, "Change all your dates around to fit my schedule," do you think the majority of groups would do that?

Mr Lachance: Maybe they wouldn't be able to do that. The thing is, I've noticed, let's say, on a grand opening of something, you expect the member of the provincial Parliament to be there, but you also expect the member of the federal Parliament. You also expect the mayor to be there. Sometimes at this present time, just getting all those three people to agree on a date is difficult enough, given that there are three different schedules or agendas. But with a larger riding, it would make it even that much more difficult.

Mr Bisson: The second thing is, the member opposite's point of view was that he drives four hours a day to be able to get to Queen's Park and back to his riding. He might be able to do that, being that he's in around Barrie or Peterborough, whatever it is. How practical would it be for a member from Timmins or a member living in Kapuskasing to try to drive from Queen's Park to their riding to get to an event?

Mr Stewart: I didn't say that.

Mr Bisson: I'm asking him a question, that's all.

Mr Lachance: From Timmins it would take eight hours and from Kap I guess it would take 10.

Mr Bisson: I guess the question that follows from that is, would you expect the provincial member to do that?

Mr Lachance: To drive?

Mr Bisson: Yes. As a group or as an individual, would you expect, if the House is in session — and as was

pointed out earlier, we go there Monday and come back Thursday.

Mr Lachance: No, I wouldn't expect them to drive up just, let's say, for a grand opening or maybe to say a few words at a ceremony of some sort.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you for your excellent presentation. I agree with you. I've got experience in southern Ontario as well and I'm still shocked at some of the questions that are coming from the members from southern Ontario, because I lived and worked there for about 18 years and now I've been up north for over 30 years. It's very easy to get around to all those areas, whether it be Hamilton, Mississauga and other areas. You can go into how many different ridings? You can probably go through about 50 or 60 of these ridings in a day and still get back and have a good night's sleep at night, but it doesn't happen in northern Ontario.

The time I use from my home to the airport, and the airport in Toronto and around, I'm talking about 10 hours of flying time and taxis to the airport. So that's 10 hours of time that I don't accomplish a heck of a lot, and then being at Queen's Park for four days.

I'm going to let you make a comment afterwards, but now they've made the announcement today that they're going to keep everybody down in the Legislature through Christmas and January and February and right on through. I don't understand why they haven't been able to manage their affairs, that they can't get their legislation done during the calendar which adjourns on December 12 and starts up again at the end of March. If they're so incompetent that they can't get their work done without taking the time away that a member needs in his constituency, it's time to get a new government if they're that incompetent that they can't get it done.

I'd just like to say thank you for your presentation. I understand what you're saying, even though they don't.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Marc, for a very personal and interesting submission today.

SOCIAL ACTION COALITION TIMMINS

The Acting Chair: Who's our next group? The Social Action Coalition Timmins, Raymond Séguin.

Mr Raymond Séguin: I thought I was on at 2:20.

The Acting Chair: You're on right now, sir.

Mr Bisson: Can we just take a two-minute break and let him get set up? We'll grab a coffee and come back. He just walked in.

The Acting Chair: A one-minute break. Go get your coffee or a glass of water. No smoking, though.

The committee recessed from 1356 to 1357.

The Acting Chair: We're going to get back on track here. Welcome, Monsieur Séguin, to the committee for a submission. You have 20 minutes you can use yourself or, if it ends shortly, then we can ask you some questions. Proceed.

Mr Séguin: I want to start by thanking the committee today for letting me have the opportunity on behalf of SACT to present a brief regarding the distribution of our ridings. I'll spare you the benefit of reading what the Social Action Coalition Timmins consists of and also the past history of its existence, which you'll find on the first

page of the brief. I'll leave you some questions. If you want questions about that, I'll answer that after.

My purpose today is to speak about the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996, that is being proposed by this government, and in my view will become law, as the government fully intends to pass this legislation.

Our organization is very much concerned with the direction this government is taking on many issues. The cuts this government has introduced since it has been elected have forced many people to seek help from others, which at one time was not necessary for those people to do. We can sum this up as being self-reliant, or the term that we call self-reliant. This is not as easy as it seems for some people as they require assistance with whatever particular problem they are faced with. Of course this leaves the most vulnerable in our society in a situation that is unpleasant for them to be in, without any representation for them to depend on. Then we have those who simply require the help because they are at a roadblock and only political interference will resolve the matter.

This is what this government will do for the people of Ontario: reduce the services available to them at a time when everything from children, women, workers, education, day care, legal aid, public housing, workers' compensation, seniors, health, aboriginals to the poor are being attacked by this government in the form of cuts, only to provide a tax cut for the rich. They are now going to take away a source of representation that is free to those who cannot buy it. This takes away representation and is very destructive for our society as a whole, especially at this time.

We will see this government in the near future implementing its privatization plan which will further erode the standard of living for many of us. There will be those who will be unable to afford the very necessity that one requires to live a life that is considered appropriate in our society.

In the Common Sense Revolution document it indicated that there is an approximate saving of \$11 million as a result of this change. It is too little of a saving for this to be appropriate legislation at this time. When more and more people require help as a result of this government's cuts, increasing MPPs would be the most appropriate thing to do. We know that the federal government increased the number of MPs, not decreased them. The organizations that we represent have all told us the same thing: They cannot keep up with the demand that is put upon them by their constituents. We know that the same thing can be said for most MPPs as well.

The size of this riding is grand. It will be bigger than some 70 countries. This is not acceptable. The geographical area that our representatives must cover is absurd. Some committee members might say, "If the federal government members can do this, why can't the provincial members do it?" Everyone knows, certainly those who have been involved in politics long enough, that federal members of Parliament are not faced with the same kinds of possible issues that can be faced by a provincial member of Parliament. The issues cannot be compared.

Finally, we have the process this government chose in order to implement this legislation. It certainly is not in keeping with tradition. In the past, other governments have appointed a commission to deal with the process of redistribution. Of course, the commission was given terms of reference and people were allowed to appear before this commission. This allowed the government to be seen as more neutral to the process, and the people were comforted by the fact that they contributed to the new democracy that was adopted at that time. Unfortunately, we lost our democracy in June 1995.

The process is a sham, and the result of the redistribution is based on a study that demonstrated the need for more representation. However, this legislation reduces representation to the people of Ontario. Also, it is unfair to the north, as they will lose their voice to Queen's Park. That voice is already in need of assistance when facing the obstacle of distance to Queen's Park.

I am providing you with a copy of an article from the Toronto Star dated November 6, 1996, and the title is, "Having Fewer MPPs Won't Save Any Money."

I say shame to a government that does not recognize the need for minorities within a society. One day you will see these minorities come together and expel this undemocratic government.

I'll end by quoting one of the Conservative strategists, Tom Long, when he said, "We didn't come here to represent those people." This was his comment following the days of protest in Toronto. If you did not come here to represent those people, whom did you come to represent?

I ask that you reconsider this legislation and recognize that studies upon studies are suggesting that representation be increased, not reduced for the mere sake of a tax break.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Séguin. There will be 10 minutes of questions, three each. We'll start with the Liberals.

Mr Sergio: Thank you for coming to make a presentation to our committee. I have a few questions, and we'll see how many we can squeeze in this afternoon.

Something that has come up quite a few times is, "If the federal members can do it, why can't you do it?" So far, we haven't tried that out. We have no idea how the federal members are going to acclimatize themselves and render that service with the new reconfigured boundaries. So we have no idea, because we haven't given them that opportunity yet. They didn't have that opportunity yet. Given that, do you think we should be having the same resources as the federal member will have in order to serve the new enlarged area?

Mr Séguin: I'm not sure exactly how much resources the member of Parliament has compared to a member of provincial Parliament. However, I am aware of the many issues that a provincial member of Parliament faces in comparison to a federal member. There are a variety of issues that are of provincial concern that accumulate a lot more than, say, a member of Parliament would have.

Mr Sergio: Just one more question. Again it's on the fact of effective representation, or whether we can do it with less resources and stuff like that. How can we do that more effectively if we don't have the same resources

as the federal member? When we heard from some of the other people here that, yes, you can use telephone and fax and so forth, we also heard that the human touch, the human appearance is important. It's not demeaning my own federal member, and he happens to be a minister of the crown, which makes it more difficult, but if you are a minister, then your time is much more limited as well — very limited.

Mr Séguin: That's correct.

Mr Sergio: The fact is that when I attend events in my own riding, be it political or social or going to church or going to a Knights of Columbus dinner or seniors fund-raising or the hospital fund-raising, whatever, most of the time the federal member is not there. They're either up in BC or in Europe on a conference or somewhere else. It's because the job is demanding. So while the issues may be slightly different, they are very demanding as well.

Mr Séguin: I'm not suggesting that they're not demanding, but the government members have been quoted and have been using the term, "If the members of Parliament can do it, why can't the members of provincial Parliament do it?" There is a difference when you compare the two of them.

Mr Sergio: The fact is that more or less, bigger or smaller, they still have the same number of committees they have to attend, some of the things they have to do up in Ottawa and so forth. It is not that, even if they have a little bit more resources, they will have less things to do; they will have the same number of things to do, perhaps on a different scale and so forth, but the issues are going to be there. And you can't have any more time allocation; that's the time. When you make the riding so much bigger — I'm talking northern Ontario now — you have to give some allowance for that. I'm asking you, what would you do to make that representation more effective?

Mr Séguin: I guess if I were a member of Parliament or a member of provincial Parliament, it's difficult because the time that is demanded of you is constant and there are only so many hours in a day.

Mr Sergio: So you have to pick and choose, right?

Mr Séguin: That's right.

Mr Sergio: And sometimes you're being told, "We don't see you any more" or "We didn't see you last Saturday over there. What's the matter, you don't like us any more? How come?"

Mr Séguin: That's right. So reducing the amount is not going to fix that problem, obviously.

The Acting Chair: Monsieur Pouliot for a change. Why not?

M. Bisson : Monsieur, vous me blessez.

Le Président suppléant : C'est bien.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much. I want to give you a scenario. Ray didn't get into this in the beginning but he represents an organization called the Social Action Coalition Timmins. I think the title describes that they're a group of people who have come together, from representatives of women groups to representatives of battered women shelters, people who work with the less fortunate in our community, in many cases. They have come together to try to figure out how you deal with the

community and how you deal with the effects in the community of the cuts that the government has done.

I want to ask you this question and I'd like you to respond: I had some constituents come into my office yesterday, basically an elderly couple in their late 50s. She was cut off her benefits from MCSS on the basis that her husband, when he originally got separated from his ex-wife in 1985, had sold his house, got \$18,000 of money from that house and then bought a mobile home in one of the local trailer parks. For whatever reason, community and social services figures he got that money after the trailer was bought in 1989, so community and social services saw that as an asset that he didn't report, because she got benefits in 1990, he bought the trailer in 1989, sold his house in 1985. For some reason, community and social services said he got that money after 1990, when she got her benefits, therefore, "It's an asset that wasn't reported; we're cutting you off." So she lost her benefits last month. They're now living, the two of them, on a total income that's about \$600 a month.

She came to see me because she had been all over the community trying to figure out: "What do I do? What happens? I know the money my husband got, he got it before he ever met me and actually he bought his trailer with it." But, for whatever reason, community and social services was given a tip by one of the hotlines that this guy somehow was trying to defraud the system. So her benefits are gone.

After sitting down with this couple for about an hour and a half yesterday morning — it took a long time to figure out what the details of the case were because they're not the most educated people, they're not as articulate as some, and all they know is they've been done wrong. They were so agitated and crying and mad for an hour and a half, it took me that long to try to figure out exactly what the nature of the problem was. As it turns out, we'll probably be able to fix the problem because we can prove that the house was sold in 1986 and we can prove when the trailer was bought and we can trace the money to show indeed it is what the gentleman says it is.

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The point is, this woman was without any benefits. If she couldn't come in and see her provincial member in a riding like Timmins — and I don't care if it's New Democrat or Tory; Alan Pope, the previous member of this riding, did a lot of this work as well, so this is not a party thing. The question I have for you is, knowing the community, if she had not been able to get to me because of the size of the riding — and let's say the future member happens to come from Kapuskasing and comes into this part of the riding every couple of weeks and she couldn't get in — where would she go to get this problem resolved? How would she do it?

Mr Séguin: She would probably land in a government office somewhere trying to discover how she can manage or get help or would probably get some volunteer organization out there that focuses on those areas, helping the poor and the people who have been cut off.

Mr Bisson: But in this case, she did all of that. She had been to all the government offices.

Mr Séguin: Oh, then if that's not there, she wouldn't have anything else except the streets or whoever is willing to provide a donation or take them into their home. That would be the only avenue that this person would have.

Mr Bisson: That's one of the things that you need to recognize, that in communities like ours — and I don't say this trying to put us up on soapboxes, because Alan Pope, our previous member, who was a Tory member for 14 years, built a great reputation doing constituency case work for his riding, and he was a Tory. I do the same. I'm a New Democrat, and I do the same kind of work that Alan did, and so did Bill Ferrier before him, and so did Grummett and Spooner before them, because in our communities, as Mr Ramsay pointed out, there's not a multitude of government offices that you can go to to get the services. Often, and in the case of this particular constituent, because they were not articulate and they were agitated, MCSS had barred them off the property and they were not able to even get in and try to resolve the problem. All she knew was that she had lost her money.

The point I'm trying to make is, we play a double role more so than other communities. We're both legislators, but also we do a lot of constituency case work in our ridings, probably more than most places. It's just the nature of the geography that we find ourselves in. One of the reasons we're adamant about that is that people who lose access to members will end up, quite frankly, in some cases in a pretty desperate spot.

Mr Séguin: I just would like to add to that that this organization is only a year old, so it does intend to grow in that area, where we will provide certain services that perhaps were provided at one point and were no longer providable due to the cuts of this government. We'll be looking at that in the future.

Le Président suppléant : Merci, Monsieur Séguin, for coming in and presenting your views today. Our next deputant is Mr Fred Poulin.

Interjections.

The Acting Chair: My apologies.

Mr Séguin: I didn't get any questions from government members, no.

Mr Gilchrist: You're just overly anxious. They took so long, I guess you just figured that was it.

The Acting Chair: Do you have a question, Mr Gilchrist?

Mr Gilchrist: Very briefly, just to follow up on Mr Bisson's comments, because, again, the dynamic in every riding is different. There is nobody who denies that. I'd be the first to admit travel time is something very different than what I face in my riding. I hope Mr Bisson would admit that in my case, for example, just to pick a comparison, not to affect the northeast, between my riding and, say, Howard Hampton's riding, I have over four and a half times the population. I also asked how many Ontario Housing units were out there. There's one seventh. There are fewer people on government assistance. There are fewer people affected by every aspect of provincial government.

With the greatest of respect for his travel, I hope he would agree that, let's say, if there was something that

changed Ontario Housing, I would be more likely to have a phone call or a visit than somebody who has next to no Ontario Housing in their riding. That just stands to reason. So there's a different dynamic there.

The thing I'm having difficulty wrestling with here is, only ever having sat on this side of the House and so I don't have the ability to have the two points of view, given that it's the government members who have to maintain quorum and given that we are required to be on any number of other committees that deal with the formulation of policy and the research behind that, over and above legislative committees, I think I could make a pretty good case that government members need to be at Queen's Park more than opposition members, particularly for the full day. If that's the case, I have a problem with why their House leaders would not be sympathetic in those four rural northern ridings that would exist, or even the nine that exist today, and why they wouldn't have a lighter workload at Queen's Park already, recognizing the extra travel time here in the north.

My question to you is, if the worst-case scenario was the merger of two ridings — let's use Algoma and Algoma-Manitoulin, because that's one of the proposals — if each of those members, Mr Wildman and Mr Brown, only spend one day in their riding currently, does it not stand to reason that the new MPP, presumably either Mr Wildman, Mr Brown or maybe someone else, if they spent two days in the riding would be able to give exactly the same service as is currently being delivered? All other things considered, if they each have only one day for personal visits and now they have two days — instead of two times one, we have one times two — is it not an obvious fact that they would have the same amount of opportunity to meet personally?

Mr Séguin: But again, you're speaking about the dynamics. Mr Bisson gave you a description of the dynamics historically in the north. It's a pick-and-choose situation. Obviously, with less time — because Timmins-Chapleau will have only one member now, which is equivalent to the same riding of Cochrane North and Cochrane South.

Mr Gilchrist: But again, let's say that their member — and they do; Mr Silipo, for example, is an NDP member from Toronto. Why wouldn't it stand to reason that because Mr Silipo can get home to his riding, as I can, in an hour and so we could do things Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday night, and we do, whereas the members up here, we absolutely agree, can't get up here for a ribbon-cutting or 50th anniversary during the weekdays —

Mr Bisson: Or a constituency case call.

Mr Gilchrist: They could take phone calls, but they're limited in other personal visits. Why wouldn't all parties recognize that the members with the greatest geographical problems offset those who are close to Toronto and Mr Silipo spend four days at Queen's Park and allow Mr Bisson or Mr Wood to spend only three days? Would that not be a practical tradeoff to every party?

Mr Séguin: I'm not sure if I understand your question, but I guess the only thing I can say to that is that study upon study is demonstrating that there's a need for more representation. Also, your legislation is suggesting

reducing the representation based on a study that has demonstrated the need for more. That's the only thing I could answer.

Le Président suppléant : Merci, Monsieur Séguin, for coming in today and presenting your views.

Is Mr Fred Poulin available from the Cochrane North Coalition Group?

CITY OF TIMMINS

The Acting Chair: Okay, here is an opportunity, members of the committee, if you want to consider it. We have in the audience the mayor for the city of Timmins, Vic Power. He would like to have an opportunity to say a few words. Is it agreed by the committee members that we hear from the mayor for the city of Timmins? Okay, Mayor Power, you have 20 minutes in which to make your remarks. If you leave some time, then we can have a good question exchange.

Mr Bisson: Can I just ask a question of the committee members?

The Acting Chair: Point of order?

Mr Bisson: Yes. I know that the city of Timmins had asked for standing, and I noticed they weren't there this morning, so I'm just wondering —

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms Donna Bryce): I'm not familiar with that at all; I just took it over.

Mr Bisson: He's here anyway. I'm just wondering what happened.

The Acting Chair: They may have; I don't know. Lynn didn't say anything about it, Monsieur Bisson.

Welcome, Mayor Power.

Mr Vic Power: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members of the committee. I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak here this afternoon. I want to welcome you to Timmins, which, by the way, is the biggest and the best and, as you can see also, the warmest city in Canada. When I mention the biggest, that brings me to the point about size of a riding. Would you believe the city of Timmins is larger than the state of Rhode Island? So, when we're talking about size, I think that's a very big factor with respect to the matters that are on the table here this afternoon.

I know that the map was redrawn based on a decision made by a federal commission on redistribution. But quite frankly and with the greatest of respect, I don't think copying someone else's mistake is progress. The federal commission on redistribution, in my humble opinion, did not do a good job. I spoke before them on May 4, 1994, when they were in Timmins, and made a number of points on behalf of our city and I think on behalf of people in northern Ontario generally. When the number of seats is reduced, when the size of a riding is increased, I don't think you're doing any favour for anybody in northern Ontario when this happens.

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I can see where it may not apply the same way to southern Ontario. Someone was just talking about a riding in downtown Toronto where the population is compact and it's easy to get by streetcar to Queen's Park and so on. But when we're talking about the vast area of northern Ontario, where one city itself is bigger than the

state of Rhode Island and that city is only a small part of the riding, I think size is a very important factor. I know there are a lot of components that make up a decision on redistribution, but certainly size has to be one of them.

Another component has to be the resources. The wealth that has been generated in northern Ontario is very great in relation to its size and in relation to its population. For example, just one example, as you drive by the Hollinger mine, as you may or may not this afternoon or you may have yesterday — the Hollinger mine is no longer operating, but it's the forerunner of Hollinger Inc — that one mine produced, in its 58 years of production, gold equivalent, at today's prices, to \$15 billion. That's just one example. Within the same 20-mile radius, the McIntyre mine, the big Dome mine, which is still going and going strong, Kidd Creek, formerly known as Texas Gulf, and then a whole host of smaller properties have produced phenomenal wealth for this province and this country. To think that we're going to be losing out in the representation process is really, frankly, a sad thought. I think it puts us at a great disadvantage.

The only other point that I would like to stress is community of interest. Cochrane South has a community of interest among Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson. By that, I mean people in Matheson and people in Iroquois Falls and the surrounding region do their shopping here in the city of Timmins, they seek professional services within the city of Timmins and, while we're not out to annex them, because we're already big enough, it is true to say there's a greater community of interest within that region than there is in the proposal that is designated as Timmins-James Bay.

So I mention those points. They say there's an old rule that you should not mention too many points in any case, because they're going to forget them. I've made three. I bring them to your attention. I don't want to speak for too long because I always remember watching Joey Smallwood at a federal-provincial conference a number of years ago; he was going on at great length, and finally he had to apologize to the chairman. He said, "I'm sorry, sir, I didn't have the time to prepare a short speech." I'll be pleased to answer any questions if I can be helpful to the committee.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Power. We do have some questions for you. We'll have five minutes for each caucus, starting with Monsieur Bisson from the NDP.

Mr Bisson: You touched on three points, and we'll stick to those three points. You, I know, were quite active, as mayor of the city of Timmins and a concerned citizen generally — you've been involved in politics for a long time — in trying to get the federal government of the day to recognize those synergies that you talk about in regard to the new boundaries that the federal government was proposing.

The federal government made proposals for redistribution. They gave basically what they thought the boundary descriptions should be. You and many others across the country had an opportunity to present to the commission on electoral boundaries at the federal level. Did they, through that process, make some changes to what originally was proposed?

Mr Power: I think they might have made some changes, but really the end result is what counts and the end result is not satisfactory. First of all, I think the big mistake was they reduced the number of ridings for northern Ontario, because as soon as you reduce the number of ridings, obviously size becomes more of a factor than it has to be.

Really, what I'm interested in is the outcome, and I don't think their outcome — mind you, they had some very learned judges on the panel. I don't doubt that for a minute. But I don't think they had a familiarity with northern Ontario, and there's no surprise in that. A lot of people spend their lives within the boundaries of Metro Toronto and I don't fault them for that. It's just that I don't think they had the background in what our region is all about.

Mr Bisson: Succinctly put, what's been left in the end in regard to the final boundaries, you're not quite happy with those to start with.

The second question I have is because you bring a unique perspective. John Murphy was here earlier, a former member of your council whom you know quite well. John has been active in the community a long time. He talked about our going through the amalgamation process some 20 years ago in our community, and we went from more politicians to fewer. If I was to go to you or somebody was to suggest — I wouldn't want to suggest this, because I think I would probably get the wrath of the voters, but if somebody went in and said, "Listen, we're going to reduce the representation in the east end of the city from the representative for South Porcupine and the other one for Whitney down to one," do you think that would be a move in the right direction?

Mr Power: My only direction, if I were to make that move, would be to head to some other part of the country, because I would have a very difficult time getting through the city of Timmins.

Mr Bisson: The point I'm getting at is the government is saying you can do more with less. I think nobody disagrees that governments have to be more efficient and have to keep up with the technology and have to find better ways of doing things, but in the end the city of Timmins would not contemplate reducing the representation on council for the east end by one in order to satisfy some political —

Mr Power: No. To give you the factual background, we did it for the entire city in 1980. As a matter of fact, I moved the motion. We had a referendum on it and we reduced the number of aldermen from 14 to eight. We did that long before anybody was talking about downsizing. A 14-member council, plus the mayor, we felt was unwieldy, so since December 1, 1980, we've had an eight-member council.

Mr Bisson: The point I'm getting at is that in the case of the city of Timmins, you still have eight elected representatives, plus the mayor, who are there representing different wards within the city that people could go to. To suggest that somehow you'd go to one for the east end or one mayor and one councillor for the whole city, that wouldn't make a lot of sense to you.

Mr Power: No.

Mr Bisson: Okay. Do I have time for a last question, Chair?

The Acting Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Mr Bisson: You talked about communities of interest and I think that's something that is lost in this debate. Iroquois Falls and Matheson are going to be carved out of Cochrane South, and they will be put in with Timiskaming, whatever it's called. Cochrane is going to move into that new riding as well. What does that mean for those people?

Mr Power: The words "community of interests" tells it all. I don't think they'll have the same relationship to their member that they should have. That's my feeling. For example, quite frankly, there's more community of interest between Kirkland Lake and Timmins than there is, say, between Timmins and Hearst, because Kirkland Lake is a mining camp from way back and we have the same feeling towards the mining industry.

Mr Bisson: Is Iroquois Falls best served being part of the Timmins riding, or would it be better served the other way?

Mr Power: I think Iroquois Falls is still better with the Timmins riding, but they're not going to be, of course, in this setup. Iroquois Falls people come here, as I say, every Friday night to do their grocery shopping.

The Acting Chair: Mr Tascona. Mr Stewart and Mr Hardeman also want to share your five minutes.

Mr Tascona: Thank you for coming here today. Would you agree — and I'm talking about the riding boundaries, because they'll be the same now — that the federal and provincial members serving the same constituents and municipalities will be better able to focus on projects and develop a team approach with their municipal partners to achieve better representation?

Mr Power: I'm not certain of that. I don't see a lot of contact between the federal and provincial members at the present time. That may be some time in the future, but I don't see that as a plus that could be identified right now, anyway.

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Mr Tascona: I know in my own riding I work very closely with the federal member. I think having the same boundaries, if we worked together in terms of trying to achieve the best for the riding, we could achieve that, if we worked knowing that we were serving the same constituents.

Mr Power: You could very well be right, but I think that could be said whether the boundaries overlapped or whether they were contiguous.

Mr Tascona: If you're serving different people, it wouldn't work that way, but if you're serving the same, I think it could.

Mr Power: What I'm getting at is, let's say the federal riding overlapped two provincial ridings. There is nothing to stop the two provincial members from working with the federal member or what have you.

Mr Tascona: That's true. I agree with that. As you would be aware because you're a municipal politician, obviously there's an infrastructure in place set up by the provincial nature of our politics. We have boards, agencies and commissions that hold and exercise delegated powers by the provincial Legislature; for example,

school boards, municipalities. Wouldn't you agree that network provides a greater opportunity for input into provincial issues than, for example, the federal member, who doesn't have that infrastructure?

Mr Power: The federal member would have no contact, for example, with the school boards or the police commission. But I still don't quite get the question.

Mr Tascona: Basically we have an infrastructure in place where the MPP is assisted by these agencies and municipalities. We work together to try to solve issues.

Mr Power: That's true.

Mr Tascona: I note your comment with respect to the amalgamation of Timmins, that you went from 14 to eight. You said that it was unwieldy. Did you find that when you went to fewer that maybe the member had a greater opportunity for input into the municipal issues?

Mr Power: I will admit that and we had frankly better council meetings following that, but proportionately the representation stayed the same. In other words, half the representation is from what we call the old town of Timmins and the other half is from the outlying areas, so proportionately nobody lost anything.

Mr Tascona: But the members had a greater chance to give input into the areas they represented.

Mr Power: There's no question the meetings were better from that point on.

Mr Stewart: Are you finding it was working well too? In 1980, what was the population here? Has it grown much since 1980?

Mr Power: It hasn't grown a lot. It was about 42,000 at amalgamation in 1973 and it's about 47,000 now.

Mr Stewart: So it hasn't made any appreciable change.

Mr Power: It hasn't grown a lot, no.

Mr Stewart: I guess one of the concerns I have, and we've heard it a bit today, is the fact that the north is sending their resources down south, that they help pay the bills. But I think what we all have to agree with also is that we're all Ontarians.

Mr Power: That's right.

Mr Stewart: Certainly the agricultural community and the industrial community of the south I think contribute quite well to the north. I would hate to go out of these hearings — and I have that feeling that they're trying to pit the north against the south. I believe we're all Ontarians and I think we should work together, not saying this is mine or that's yours or we're putting a whole bunch of tax dollars in and you're giving us nothing back. I think we're all part of the scenario and I would hate for any of us to feel that it's a north-south issue. Just a comment.

Mr Power: In relation to that, I happen to believe — in fact I know — we live in the best city in the best province in the best country in the world. For example, I am not a Toronto-basher. I'm just amazed at the way they run Metro Toronto and the —

Mr Stewart: So am I, sir.

Mr Power: Regardless of what we read about the sideshows, I think they do a tremendous job running a huge city of two and a half million people. We don't have that feeling that we're against anybody. It's not an us-against-them situation.

Mr Stewart: I appreciate that and I think I wanted to get that on the record.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you for the presentation. I noticed in the presentation you mentioned you spoke to the non-partisan independent commission that did the boundaries for the federal government.

Mr Power: That's right.

Mr Hardeman: It's been suggested to the hearings that we should do the same thing for the province; rather than adopt the federal commission's report, we should do another one. If that was to be done and you were to make a presentation, would you have said much different than you said to the commission that did report?

Mr Power: I probably wouldn't have said a lot different from what I did today or what I did in 1994 when I spoke to the commission, but if you, for example, Mr Hardeman, were on this commission, maybe I would have made more headway. I think the learned judges, with all due respect, really didn't have the background of northern Ontario that they should have had.

Mr Hardeman: Is there any reason to assume that those learned judges would not be the same learned judges on a provincial commission?

Mr Power: No, because probably the government would be appointing a completely different panel, I would imagine.

Mr Sergio: Mr Mayor, I appreciate your coming down and making a presentation to our committee today. We have heard practically the same concern and more or less the same questions and the same answers, so I want to try a couple of new things that we haven't really dwelt on too much. Between your level, which is the municipal level, and the province, is there another level of government in the north?

Mr Power: No, because here, for example, we're a one-tier city. This is unique. Sudbury, for example, has a regional council; here, we do everything under one umbrella.

Mr Sergio: Just in support or in defence of the northern quest, if you will — not that I'm speaking against my own Metro representative or the system we have down there but just to offset a little bit what is being said with respect to the increase in population in the Metro ridings and, yes, the concerns down there vary from social assistance to housing to a number of major problems. But let me say what we have, what we say, in support of the quest of the northern ridings here. What we have in Metro, I have to deal with the local MP, and I'm lucky because we cover exactly the same area. I have the local mayor; we have the Metro mayor or supermayor. We have two Metro council representatives, because the way they are divided at the moment, we split corners here and corners there. So I deal with two Metro councillors, two mayors, two local councillors, again because of the way the area is divided. I have to be in contact with all those people on all different issues. I deal with two school trustees, separate school and public school. Of course, then there is myself, and then we have a slew of rate-payers' organizations and so forth.

My problem is this and my question is this: It's something that is totally overshadowed, totally unforeseen. I don't think this was taken into consideration by

the federal commission, I don't think this is something that we are taking into consideration now, and I don't think it's something the provincial government has taken into consideration when proposing these changes to us. Saying it's easier for administration purposes sounds good politically. Yes, sure, it may save some dollars, even though we haven't seen it, but they haven't really told the people up north, not as much as we in the south, the difference between the north and the south.

We are making some of your areas much bigger, very difficult to govern. In the south, sure, we have more presentation, but we also have a lot more help, even though some of the same problems may overlap. They may be calling me for a broken sidewalk because they may not know who is the local councillor. But if we have this type of assistance in Metro, down in the south, in Toronto, let's say, the representatives up here don't. They have to rely solely on their office staff or their own staff from Queen's Park if they happen to be in the city. So do you feel that the people up north are not receiving the same service as we in the south are offering to the people in Metro?

Mr Power: Put it this way: Once the riding becomes larger, I would think that whoever the provincial MPP is, he might as well stay at Queen's Park and run everything by fax machines and telephone and whatever other communications devices are going to be invented by Ma Bell and these people in the next few years, because he's going to be almost as close, really — you know, they say you're only a telephone call away. He's going to be as close to people in James Bay, being in Toronto, really, as he would be in Timmins; maybe not geographically, but in every other way.

Mr Sergio: Although I have a fairly good idea of Ontario geographically, we are being repeatedly told here today that the north starts at Sudbury. We can't think that all the communities have available to them those fax machines, telephones and computers and agencies and —

Mr Power: Oh, yes, they do now, and certainly that will be even more in place as the years progress. Telecommunications have come a long way. Ontario Northland, which is a crown agency, has put forward quite a program as far as telecommunications are concerned.

Mr Sergio: My last question to you, if I have the time: Do you really think if the legislation goes through as it is being proposed, the people up north, especially in the large ridings, will receive fair representation; more effective with less representation?

Mr Power: No, I don't think they'll be getting better representation. As I say, their member might as well stay at Queen's Park. They won't see him very often. Whether they call it Cochrane South or Timmins-James Bay, I can't see how that member is going to travel to, say, the coastal communities in James Bay and then try to be at a function in Timmins the same weekend, that sort of thing. He's going to have to go where the majority of the people are, which is right here.

Mr Sergio: Are we going to be saving any money? Sorry, I don't want to cut you short.

Mr Power: I can't imagine that you —

Mr Sergio: Worthwhile?

Mr Power: If you were to save money, it might be penny wise and pound foolish. I don't think it would be a lot of money.

Mr Sergio: So it's more foolish.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Power, for coming and making your views known. We've enjoyed being in your city. It's nice, cosy and warm.

Mr Power: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and I extend my appreciation to all members of the committee.

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COCHRANE NORTH MUNICIPAL COALITION

The Acting Chair: Our next deputant is the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls, Mayor Fred Poulin, representing the Cochrane North Municipal Coalition.

Mr Fred Poulin: Thank you very much, sir. I apologize. I just came in.

The Acting Chair: That's fine, Mayor Poulin. You have 20 minutes. Your presentation, I see, is brief, so we'll probably have about five minutes of questions from each of the three caucuses, and that will pretty well conclude your presentation. Proceed.

Mr Poulin: As you can see, I'm representing the Cochrane North Municipal Coalition. This represents the municipalities all the way from Cochrane to Hearst, which include Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing, Moonbeam, Fauquier, all the way through to Hearst. I'm referring to Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act, and the proposed legislation to eliminate five electoral ridings in northern Ontario.

Members of the legislative committee, on behalf of the Cochrane North Municipal Coalition, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee today to express the concern of its 10 member municipalities located in the provincial riding of Cochrane North with respect to the provincial electoral riding changes being proposed under Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996. Under this proposed legislation, the riding of Cochrane North, one of the larger ridings as far as land mass, will almost double in size.

The coalition member municipalities recognize the fact that despite population increases elsewhere in the province, many of our northern communities have suffered population decreases due predominantly to the economic difficulties facing many of our single-industry communities. This should however not neglect the responsibility of the provincial government to ensure that there is effective representation for all citizens of Ontario, whether they choose to live in northern Ontario or southern Ontario.

At a time when we are faced with numerous closures and restructuring of provincial government offices, oftentimes resulting in a decreased governmental presence, it becomes even more essential to be able to address our concerns directly with the local member of the provincial Parliament.

Members of provincial Parliament make every effort to be accessible to the electorate they represent. This task becomes more onerous in northern Ontario where geographical locations of communities within ridings are prohibitive distances apart, resulting in extensive travel,

more times than not in hazardous conditions and in some instances only by air transportation.

I might comment that the reason I was late today is because of our highway conditions in northern Ontario. I allowed myself two hours and I made it in an hour and a half.

The coalition considers effective representation —

Mr Bisson: Hang on a second. You allowed yourself two hours and you came in an hour and a half?

Mr Poulin: Yes.

Mr Bisson: Because it's usually the other way round.

Mr Poulin: Oh, yes, pardon me. I allowed myself one and I made it in an hour and a half.

The Acting Chair: You got here safely, sir.

Mr Poulin: And I also had the OPP behind me.

The coalition considers effective representation to be important to residents of our area as an effective voice in government. We rely on our members not only in this capacity, but also we turn to our members as the resource people who are able to access and obtain information or resolve concerns. In the past this worked well because of the affiliations and cooperative networking between Cochrane North municipalities, as our concerns and matters of interest are often shared by our member municipalities.

The Cochrane North Municipal Coalition strongly opposes changes to the riding and believes factors such as communities of interest, geography, historical patterns and effective representation must be given consideration.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and please consider the consequences these changes will make as far as equitable representation. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Poulin. We have some questions for you, starting with the government.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor, for your presentation. Just quickly, on the second page, on the question of, "At a time when we are faced with numerous closures and restructuring of provincial government offices, oftentimes resulting in a decreased government presence," it's appropriate to be able to deal with your local members.

I'm wondering, as an organization representing municipalities — and municipalities have been telling the provincial government for some time that they should be recognized as a third level of government — is it appropriate to suggest that, as the government moves to more local autonomy, to have municipalities dealing with the issues they are responsible for and not have to get the permission or the assistance from the provincial government? Will that not help the situation, that you would spend more time making your decisions rather than asking the member what he thinks the province will allow you to do?

Mr Poulin: I certainly tend to agree, Mr Hardeman, to a certain extent. In larger municipalities, for example, Timmins, where they have the manpower and the staff available to cope with these changes in government resources, yes, I do agree, but in smaller municipalities such as Smooth Rock Falls, we have reduced our staff to practically nil and the only other source is to contact our

member of Parliament and his staff on many occasions, because we haven't got the resource people available.

Mr Hardeman: Not to be facetious, but could you give me one or two examples of the type of information we're talking about that you would previously have had from your own staff, but because of downsizing of your municipality, you now get that information and your local member would have that information?

Mr Poulin: This goes on on a daily basis. For example, as you know, northern Ontario's biggest tourism industry today is snowmobiling, and on many occasions I have people come to see me at my office in regard to roads being put through by the forest industry, eliminating skidoo trails. What avenue does that give me with the resources I have? The only avenue I get is to go to my provincial member and have him bring these issues to the forest industry or mining or whatever industries in northern Ontario. This is only one example.

Mr Hardeman: On those occasions that you just mentioned, Mr Poulin — I am trying to get this straight — and you say they happen daily or could happen daily, as you contact your local MPP's office, on a percentage basis how often do you speak directly to the MPP?

Mr Poulin: I speak to my member of Parliament at least once a week on different occasions, Mr Hardeman.

Mr Hardeman: I want to commend that member who is in his office on a daily basis enough to get caught once a week by the mayor.

Mr Bisson: The staff gets the messages. We deal with the municipalities.

Mr Hardeman: The other thing is, I guess I can take from your presentation the fact that your organization is set up as a group of municipalities so you can effectively deal with these types of issues as they relate in general to each other and again to the MPP too, to deal with the provincial government. Is that something that should be looked at, in your opinion, on a broader basis, so that if an MPP represented a greater area, you would also become a greater group of municipalities to cover off the difference?

Mr Poulin: I agree with you in a sense, but we must keep in mind, Mr Hardeman, that we have greater municipalities and smaller municipalities. That's why you can see, unfortunately, I'm here alone today, because other municipalities could not be along with me today. This is just why we're all united. We are too small to be a large group, so we have the coalition group, like I said earlier, which represents all of these small municipalities along the Highway 11 corridor.

Mr Hardeman: Would you not agree, though, that this is a good example, that you can come before this committee or it could be your own MPP, that you can come here and speak on behalf of nine other municipalities, representing their views?

Mr Poulin: I certainly commend the government for coming to the city of Timmins and allowing us to make our presentation known. I listen to the House every day and I noted yesterday that the government has had hearings on rent control. Unfortunately, to my disappointing news, the minister did not get the message from the public. I'm hoping that you people can go back to Toronto and bring your message across at Queen's Park

that we are very concerned, not only North Cochrane but all of the Cochrane district. I'm glad to see that my good friend His Worship Vic Power was here prior to me sitting down. I think we all have a common goal. Even though our population base is small, the area is huge.

1450

Mr Stewart: Just a question. You were saying that you talk to your MPP once a week. I assume that's done by phone?

Mr Poulin: Yes.

Mr Stewart: Why would that change if the area became larger? You're still going to have the same contact with him, I assume.

Mr Bisson: You've got more municipalities.

Mr Stewart: Let me ask the gentleman.

Mr Poulin: Thank you very much, Mr Stewart. Yes, with today's communication system you can contact anybody at any hour of the day, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, I agree, but in our condition we need to see our member of Parliament and we need to see him around the area.

Mr Stewart: Well, you see him here today, but normally, does he go to all your coalition meetings and all your council meetings, three, four, five or half a dozen times a year? I'm just trying to get a feel for it, that's all.

Mr Poulin: Mr Wood is in my office —

Mr Stewart: Oh, so it's Mr Wood. Sorry.

Mr Poulin: Yes. He's in my office periodically. Just to give you an example, at 6 o'clock tonight I have a chamber of commerce meeting in Smooth Rock Falls. I've tried to contact Mr Wood. Unfortunately his schedule doesn't make it, but I will have to apologize on his behalf and be present at that chamber of commerce meeting and explain to the chamber what's going on in the Cochrane district.

Mr Stewart: My wife's doing a couple for me tonight too, sir, if I don't get back. Can I ask one quick question? The northern development officers — and I see there are a number of them in the Timmins area or in this area — do you use them regularly or very often or will they assist you in things if you can't get a hold of Mr Wood?

Mr Poulin: We are in constant contact with the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Just for your information, they have a representative in Cochrane, Mr Yvon Charette.

Mr Stewart: They're helpful as well?

Mr Poulin: Yes, they are, because they're in the district.

Mr Sergio: Mr Mayor, thanks for coming down and making a presentation today. Just before you, Mayor Power, on one of my questions, I was questioning how much savings we would have with the implementation of this plan.

Mr Poulin: I apologize. I couldn't quite get that. Could you start again, please?

Mr Sergio: Yes.

Mr Poulin: Thank you very much.

Mr Sergio: I was questioning Mayor Power before you as to the possible savings by implementing this particular legislation. He thought about it and I don't think he saw savings coming. He said, "I think we are

being penny wise and pound foolish." Do you think we're going to have any savings with the so-called elimination of 27 MPPs?

Mr Poulin: In the eyes of the government, yes, but in the eyes of the municipalities, no, because definitely it'll be more of an expense for each representative, each municipality, to contact their member of Parliament and be able to reach him. For example, it's like going down south and telling the people of southern Ontario, "You'll have one member of Parliament representing the corridor from Windsor to Quebec City," and I'm using that as an example. As I read in Hansard — I read Hansard quite often — it's like telling Moosonee that they'll have a member of Parliament in Sault Ste Marie. In order to contact their member of Parliament they'll have to go by air and land in Sault Ste Marie, which is very costly to the municipalities, and it's that way throughout the riding.

Mr Sergio: I'm sure you keep abreast with events coming out from the provincial government, from our leaders there. They are moving towards privatization, if you will, and yes, allowing more autonomy, more power, to the local municipalities. How are you going to get the two of them together? In one way, they're going to give you more power; in another way they're going to privatize some of the things that you could be doing yourself, and stuff like that. Do you see that this is a benefit to the local municipalities?

Mr Poulin: I'd say it's a disadvantage to the municipality. Let me give you one example. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs announced recently that they will give the municipalities more power in their planning, zoning amendments, the zoning bylaws and so forth. Smooth Rock Falls, as I said, being a small municipality, we have to send our administrator down to Toronto. We had made arrangements during the Ontario Good Roads convention that he would be going to school for one day in Toronto just to study the Planning Act. That's one example of the extra cost to municipalities that the government has burdened us with.

Mr Sergio: So if there are indeed any savings whatsoever, it wouldn't really be worth eliminating that little bit of layer of democracy left, if you will, towards the northern ridings by taking away some of the representation?

Mr Poulin: I don't quite understand your question, sir.

Mr Sergio: What I'm trying to say is that the north will be reduced by five members, the representation of the northern ridings here. Whatever savings there may be, do you think it's worth eliminating five representatives?

Mr Poulin: No, honestly I don't think it's worth it, in comparison to the extra cost that will fall on to the municipalities. All we're doing is taking a dollar from here and putting it over there, and the consumer down the line is going to pay. Whether the consumer pays the province or whether the consumer pays the municipality, it's going to come out of their pockets, either way.

Mr Sergio: Do you see it more as a political move?

Mr Poulin: Yes, I would say so.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you very much, Fred, for coming forward. I travelled on the same road as you did this morning. It was white-knuckle driving since they put a freeze on the amount of money that can be spent on

plowing and sanding, and as well hiring contractors to do the work now. But I appreciate very much that you're here all in one piece, and I hope it's a safe drive back tonight. I appreciate the comments you made in terms of speaking, because we do have a chat in the office and talk over the issues.

I'm very much concerned, because the presentation before you made a comment that the federal boundaries didn't make any sense, that the commission that was out there did not listen to the people, that they did not react to the new federal boundaries, and as a result of the new federal boundaries being imposed, whether it was Brian Mulroney or Jean Chrétien, whoever it was, they don't make any sense; they're flawed. Now we see the provincial government of Ontario going to adopt the same flawed boundaries that don't make any sense. I know you were involved in the federal arguments as well. I'm going to get you to make a comment on that, but also on some of the local issues.

1500

I mentioned roads. I understand that the citizens of Smooth Rock Falls are very scared, basically petrified now that the provincial government froze the amount of capital funding going to the public school system. As a result, there's a fear that the public school in Smooth Rock Falls is going to shut down and you'll have to bus children as young as five years old 40 miles either way, either to Kapuskasing or to Cochrane, for their education if this funding is not freed up. We know the reason it was frozen was to make sure they could do their campaign promise of giving a 30% tax break to the wealthy bank executives and in the large corporations who are probably going to get a \$200,000 rebate.

Those are some of the issues. We know your views and we know the views of all the mayors along Highway 11, that the Fewer Politicians Act doesn't make any sense, it should be scrapped, it shouldn't proceed any further.

The other question I have is, do you believe, from what you've heard so far in these hearings, that the Conservative members are listening and are going to listen to amendments and changes to this legislation so it does make sense for northern Ontario?

Mr Poulin: I certainly agree, Len, that I have confidence in the government of the day; otherwise I wouldn't be here. If I knew it was a waste of my time and the north Cochrane coalition group's — the reason I'm here today is to try and convey a message to the Conservative government, and I'm sure the reason they're here is the same thing: to hear our views on northern Ontario.

When it comes to education, we all know what's happened throughout the province, whether it be education, whether it be health care, whether it be highways. We know what the government is doing and we realize that the government has to do it, but what we disagree with is how they do it and when they do it. For example, in restructuring a riding — I can go down to southern Ontario and go through my riding on a bicycle, and I'm sure some of you will agree that there are ridings around the Metro area that, if you're a good cyclist, you could do on your bicycle. I challenge anybody around this table or anybody in southern Ontario to even attempt to go to

Smooth Rock Falls from Timmins on a bicycle, and this is only a small margin of our riding.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your comments and, Mr Chairman, for your time.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Poulin, for coming in and making your views known through the Cochrane North Municipal Coalition. I'd just like to let you know that as a southerner I once upon a time, just a few years ago, mind you, almost took a secondary school teaching position with Smooth Rock Falls high school. We southerners — and I've been up here to the north several times — don't know it intimately but we do know it reasonably well. Our members of the caucus here on this committee have travelled up here many times — Mr Stewart etc. So while we don't absolutely know where each pothole is that Palladini should know about, we appreciate your coming here and letting us know your views.

Mr Poulin: Thank you very much, Mr Hastings. I'm glad you didn't take that position with the Smooth Rock Falls school, because down the road you might have been out of a job.

The Acting Chair: That's true. We're into downsizing.

TOWN OF CHAPLEAU

The Acting Chair: Mr Ken Russell, reeve of Chapleau, we're ready for you, sir. You have 20 minutes. You can use it all for your own —

The Acting Chair: Yes. Good customer service here, sir.

Interjection.

Mr Ken Russell: Well, the two-and-a-half-hour drive from Chapleau is an example of crossing about one eighth of the proposed riding, so to travel the other part you're looking at 10 and a half hours, ladies and gentlemen.

To the committee members on proposed provincial electoral boundary changes, my thanks for affording me, on such short notice, the opportunity to present this brief today on behalf of my community and the north as a whole.

Were it not for the local television media, I would not be here today to express my views. No notification regarding this hearing crossed my desk in the municipality of Chapleau, an oversight, I am sure.

As the reeve of the municipality of Chapleau, I present this brief on behalf of the north, and please do not misconstrue its contents to be partisan. I am normally very apolitical. I've been in the municipal field for 14 years.

History and terms of reference: Boundary changes were made and reviewed in 1962, 1973 and 1983. Historically, the decision on the new boundaries and riding names rested with the Legislature. It would then normally follow the traditional and regular route that any bill does in the House. Why, then, has the present government broken with tradition and it has now been forced into a public hearing process such as today?

In 1973 the number of ridings was established at 125 and in 1993 was re-established at 130. The boundary electoral commission of the day must have had valid

criteria and reasons for their decisions and recommendations. In 1996, the government appears to be taking a regressive measure. Federally, we were known as the Timmins-Chapleau riding, and on January 1, 1997, we become a member of the Algoma riding. Council and our small northern community strongly opposed this change, with, of course, no success.

Committee members, Ontario municipalities do realize and fully understand that financial restraints and cutbacks are a reality of our times. Common sense dictates that we must support this concept both for economic and social stability.

Community position on boundary changes, from my community: In the proposed riding of Nickel Belt, the distance across is about 300 kilometres. That is the same distance from Toronto to Cleveland, Ohio. Over 80 countries and 45 US states are smaller than the northern riding of Kenora-Rainy River, and this same comparison will hold true to the proposed Algoma riding.

I am sure that today many northerners have already expressed concern about the treatment of the north which it has received from the government with the proposal to eliminate five electoral ridings in northern Ontario. Over decades, our community has been well served by our provincial elected members in Nickel Belt. Will we receive the same regular visits and dedication with the larger riding of Algoma? Not likely.

Distances travelled in most ridings in southern Ontario by elected representatives are, under most circumstances, frequent and relatively easy. What about the north? We as Ontarians have just as much right to meet with our provincial members, expressing our concerns and grievances. With larger ridings and fewer provincial government members, this reality will fade. Travel distances, weather conditions etc will only force curtailment of visits that are vital for the northern voice.

Although we in the north only compose 10% of the population, you must remember that we provide 90% of the natural resources. Chapleau itself is rather unique, as for many years we were not sure to which area we belonged, and at that time we were referred to, even in the House, as an illegitimate child. There was another term, but I didn't want to use it in this speech.

Federally, we were associated with Timmins: UIC etc. Provincial services such as Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing were from Sudbury. The Ministry of Transportation office was in Sault Ste Marie. One can easily see what a quagmire existed. With riding redistribution, the past scenarios will again recur. Our ties are with Sudbury and Nickel Belt, not Wawa, Sault Ste Marie or the Algoma riding.

Committee members, Chapleau and the surrounding communities and the north as a whole are strongly opposed to the proposed riding changes. We cannot afford to lose our parliamentary representation. Hear this voice in the north, please. Your input for decision-making we know will carry a great weight. One remembers, a few decades ago a movement to separate north from south. Let us not have tunnel vision again. We are proud of Ontario, and being northerners of this great province makes us feel a belonging second to none.

Due to such short notice and forced by time restraints and due to poor notification and communication once again, this brief was prepared this morning. The required 30 copies will be typed and faxed early next week — or the required one copy, as we've just discussed with the secretary.

1510

I do not propose to be a statistician, but I think something is drastically wrong with the analysis of the distribution of population and distances, with losing five ridings in northern Ontario as compared to the 20-plus in southern Ontario. I have had my treasurer work today, and hopefully Monday I'll come up with statistical figures to prove that it does not seem fair when you take distribution, population and area to distribute according to the five lost seats in northern Ontario and the loss of 20-plus in southern Ontario.

I wish again to thank you for the hearing to express our concerns on this brief. In closing, please let us be progressive in the north, not regressive. I thank you, Mr Chair, and I thank you, members, for hearing my brief.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Reeve Russell. We have about 15 minutes for questions. We'll start with Mr Sergio for the Liberals.

Mr Sergio: Mr Reeve, thanks for coming down and making a presentation to our committee here. Much has been said with respect to the federal commission and the federal government making recommendations and so forth. That commission took a couple of years before it came to a conclusion and made its recommendations, and even after that time, quite a few areas were showing some concern. To that effect, the commission of the federal government allowed some seven or eight months for appeals and for possible changes. Though I'm not familiar myself with it, I believe some changes and amendments were made during that seven-month period.

Having taken your concern that you just got wind of the hearing here through TV, do you really think the changes proposed are that important that we could have perhaps a three-month period during which you people can absorb these changes, the government will absorb what we have heard, and come back in three or four months and make a recommendation? Do you think that would be beneficial?

Mr Russell: I certainly do. As they say — excuse the expression — I was basically caught with my pants down yesterday when I received the information to be here today. It is a very close concern to my community. Agreed, we're only 3,000, a catchment area of maybe 7,000 to 8,000, but I think the citizens have a right to input.

We have been very fortunate — please understand I'm not being partisan. We have the longest-sitting member, I believe, in the Legislature. He, or whoever it happens to be, has always been available and has travelled to Chapleau. An example of today is that it took me two and a half hours to get here; I don't know how much getting back. But he has always been here every month. I did hear the question faced by the Chair, I think, from John before, about using telex, using fax, using this and that. Face-to-face contact is the best. I don't care what electronics you have or what you use, the face to face

and the sit-down to understand the problems or grievances — and they're not always grievances; there are a lot of positive things to this too, please. Don't misunderstand me.

Mr Sergio: I'm trying to get another question, although I enjoy your comments.

Mr Russell: I'm sorry. I think a time element would be very wise.

Mr Sergio: Thank you. I also come from a municipal background, and I'm sure you've heard of Mr Mayor Lastman. We would never dare hold a public hearing during summer months, that is, July and August. I'm asking you as a reeve of a municipality if this is the most appropriate time to have a public hearing on such an important issue. This is the last day of public hearings. People are already in the winter holiday mood and Christmas spirit, whatever, and I wonder if this is the best time, especially in the northern area, to expose this, if you will, to as many people as possible. Even someone like yourself just got to know about it by accident. I wonder if this would be the most appropriate time to hit the road and bring this as a public hearing.

Mr Russell: I'm going to sit on the fence on this one. If the concern is strong enough in the communities representing on a change such as this, I feel we'd get a car or we'd take our snowshoes or we'd ski. Summer recesses, to me — I've had meetings in the summer with provincial representatives — don't seem to be most ideal. Your statement, when you started, about a three-month period to go in — if the committee would be looking for that type of recommendation now it would be in January or February — I still feel strongly that if you want it bad enough you'll get there. That's my answer.

Mr Sergio: Even if the highways are closed.

Mr Russell: I can always call Al. He's been pretty good for the north today. The road was nice.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mr Sergio. Mr Bisson?

Mr Bisson: I have two questions. First, this committee has travelled to communities which probably will be least affected by redistribution, namely Timmins, Sault Ste Marie, and I believe Dryden is the other place it went to. It seems to me that the communities most affected are like yours: Chapleau, Wawa, Hearst, Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing and the list goes on.

Shouldn't you have had some sort of mechanism, rather than doing it this way, an electoral boundaries commission that at least went to those communities so that people like yourself — you drove here; you took two and a half hours to come here. That tells me you're interested, but I'm sure there are other people in your community who are equally interested. Do you think maybe the government should send this back and say, "Throw this to an electoral boundaries commission, allow the people in communities across the province to have their say and then come up with some sort of a boundary change that makes sense"?

Mr Russell: If I'd had more notification this week I could have filled the room behind me, even if it was to get a bus. It is very sensitive to us. We have known it's in the works; there's no question about that, because we receive notification. To answer your question, Mr Bisson,

I really think it should have gone through the commission process, as the federal did.

We met with the federal representative. I came and met with them. They listened. They didn't do anything about it, but they listened. At least you felt secure that you were performing your mandate on behalf of your citizens in the community, and I felt secure that way.

Mr Bisson: I think one of the things committees should take into account is that many of these communities don't have an opportunity to come and present. Timmins is not going to be as affected, and I would argue we need to hear more from the Chapleaus and Wawas in this world.

The other thing I would say is that there were some changes from what was originally presented by the boundaries commission based on the hearings. They weren't perfect and they weren't what I wanted, but at least there were some changes, and I don't have the feeling that will happen.

Second, you come from a community, Chapleau, which has been affected quite a bit by what's happened with this government with regard to cuts. I want to preface that in the question of separation you talked about. I remember Mr Ed Deibel and Mr MacKinnon and others who went around the province and signed many petitions and urged people of northern Ontario to separate and form their own province. Other people, like myself, didn't think that was a good idea. None the less there was a lot of support in northern Ontario for the idea of separation. Why? Because people felt alienated from their provincial government.

The government of Bill Davis, then the government of David Peterson, followed by the government of Mr Rae moved to try to include northern Ontario in this province that we call Ontario, so this feeling of secession on the part of northerners has subsided to a certain extent.

You come from a community that's been drastically affected: You've lost many jobs in the MNR, your fire station is shut down and you lost norOntair. I don't even know if you have any air service left.

Mr Russell: We have Pem Air, but I'm a pilot and I don't want to buy the airplane; I just want to fly on it.

Mr Bisson: Your bus deregulation is coming. You're going to lose —

Mr Russell: We have no bus.

Mr Bisson: Exactly. That's the point I'm getting at.

Mr Russell: We have no other transportation at all.

Mr Bisson: Is there a danger with this, coupled with all the cuts, that the whole feeling in the north of saying, "Let's separate," may become much more of a viable option for people in the north rather than trying to work within the provincial system we have now?

Mr Russell: I'm in the same position as you, Gilles. I would not like to see any of that situation happen. I mentioned it because maybe some committee members were not aware that it existed with Mr Deibel and the rest.

I was in Sudbury on the school board at the time that gentleman was going around, and Sudbury really wasn't as strongly supported as put in Queen's Park; Geraldton, I believe, was the proposal. There was a tremendous amount of support. I still am very strongly supportive of

whatever government is in power. Chapleau has been rather unique too, because we've had the federal representative in power but we've always had the opposition in the provincial government and vice versa; it keeps switching. One of these days we're going to get it right and have both in.

1520

But to answer your question, no, I wouldn't feel and I can't feel that in the community. It was mentioned to me this morning that this did exist. Certainly I think the community is wholly behind the provincial status quo the way it is. We are happy to be in Ontario. We're not happy with some of the ways they're dealing with us.

Mr Bisson: Just to clarify, I know that you, as I, believe in being part of Ontario, but the question is: Is there a danger that groundswell will build again with everything happening?

Mr Russell: It's possible.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Reeve, for coming before us this afternoon. We genuinely appreciate it. I must say, though, that if Mr Bisson genuinely believed that the cities that have been visited were the ones less affected, we're not presumptuous enough to suggest which three cities in the north; we left that up to the opposition. I can tell you we would have been quite content to go to Chapleau and Manitouwadge or any other town or city he wanted to go to.

The question I have, based on your submission, is very much one arising out of your comment that there was a federal boundaries commission. I appreciate that they did not accede to all the requests. I think that's understandable. Everyone who appears before your council doesn't necessarily get what they want, but that doesn't make it less democratic. I'm sure you would agree with me.

I've read in great detail the complete report from the boundaries commission. They note in here that they struggled mightily with the thought of trying to keep Chapleau in the same electoral district as Timmins but that the population imbalance that would have created was just too great.

There's no doubt that with the \$100-billion debt we face and the fact that municipalities are not supposed to go into debt either, we have similar restrictions on our ability to be free spenders these days. In the context of that, knowing that the federal commission already went around and heard from 300 people and that they acceded to some suggestions and didn't accede to others, what would be served by having a provincial commission go around and make the same stops and presumably get submissions from the same people? Would it be safe to say you would make the same submission you made to the federal commission?

Mr Russell: Yes.

Mr Gilchrist: Okay. If that's the case, since we can't look inside the minds of people who are appointed to these sorts of bodies, there would be every chance that three people appointed by the provincial government would have made exactly the same decisions as three people appointed by the federal government. Would you accept that as a possibility?

Mr Russell: That's possible. As you say, it's federal, so it's a little different from the provincial situation.

Mr Gilchrist: But the people the federal government appointed certainly didn't live in Chapleau. They were taking your submissions at face value and they weighed those against the other realities they had. They weighed it against something else too, and that's the mandate of the commission. Just to read it very briefly, it must "respect the community of interest or community of identity in or the historical pattern of an electoral district and maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province."

Unlike the provincial boundaries commissions in the past that, to be perfectly blunt, could be influenced to gerrymander because there were no numerical quotas applied, the federal government says that once you've established what the average would be — you take the number of ridings, divide the population, and that comes up to the quota, they call it — you can go 25% above and you can go 25% below. Every rural northern riding is 21% to 23% below the quota. Taking a particular village would make the difference of that 1%. So, without splitting hairs, they went to the maximum of the quota they could legally go. Obviously, to then maintain the provincial average, all the ridings in the south, or the majority of them, have to go above the quota. Some of them are considerably above as well.

Given that the two commissions would follow the same guidelines, they're driven by the same mandate and the same legislation, and given that the federal government goes one step further and prevents abuse by a government that would allow — for example, Mr Hampton's riding right now has 19,000 voters and Mr Palladini's riding has 129,000 voters — six and a quarter times the workload, which is impossible under the federal commission, would you not agree with me that whichever way they ruled on any specific request, to waste the money — to spend the money; I'm not going to use a pejorative term — to spend the money on a duplicate provincial commission would achieve nothing and would, again, if they followed the same guidelines, in all likelihood have left us with exactly the same map, not just in the north but across the province?

Mr Russell: I don't think I'm highly qualified to answer your question specifically, but I think the tune sung by the provincial system around this is a little different from the tune that's sung by Ottawa. You gave me 20 minutes today, very nice; before I only had six. I don't think we were heard, honest to God.

We have had a problem with distribution of representation in this area. I have to give credit to Mr Rhéal Gervais, who was a representative from this area; he came to Chapleau. Our other association with the federal government was our own doing. Our community along with Wawa, Manitouwadge, White River and Dubreuilville worked hard on that. They didn't listen.

I think the commission has to listen to the north. Going back, you mentioned statistics of 150,000 and 19,000 etc, I still cannot buy the statistic of losing five northern seats to 20-plus in southern Ontario on the question of statistics, demographics, population etc.

Questions were asked about expenses before. I don't think you're going to save any money, not if that MP is dedicated, but you might burn him out.

Mr Gilchrist: Let's say, for the sake of argument, that because we're reducing 27 members it stands to reason we'll certainly save their salaries, their rental of an office and their staff, and that would work out to \$11 million per year. If we cooperate with the federal government on things such as voters lists, the mapping of the ridings and the designation of polls, that is estimated to save another \$36 million per election, one-time savings, obviously. So in every four-year term we would save \$80 million.

In a perfect world we could address all things. Given the reality you have right now, would the town of Chapleau rather have \$80 million spent on MPPs, largely at Queen's Park, or would they rather have \$80 million spent on transportation infrastructure, education infrastructure or social services?

Mr Russell: That's nice if that's a possibility, that you could give us the money back, but right now my small community is being informed that you're taking another \$230,000 and \$109,000 last year. My town has, again, an unfortunately unique situation that was under supervision twice by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I fought six years to get us out.

We are working with the government; we are cutting. We have three options right now that we've been given in our township, when you talk about the cutbacks: to glean the fat out of the budget, which was done, \$109,000, last year; to look at all services, curtail services; no garbage pickup now every second week; closing the arena three days a week; our fire department, we had to increase the contracts in order to get more money. Next to discuss, which I'm going to discuss with you tonight, is layoffs, because that's the next step down the line. The third option is tax increases. I'm one who's going to put the tax increases, I'm afraid, ahead of the layoffs because I can't see people losing their jobs because of cutbacks by the provincial government. We're not here to discuss this.

Mr Gilchrist: No, and Mr Hardeman is one of the people who could, as an ex officio member of the Who Does What panel, I'm sure, talk to you for hours about this. But I'm confident that in the next few weeks you're going to see a rationalization of some services that hopefully will allow you greater flexibility in being managers of your own affairs, and the impact of the old habits of transfers back and forth will be far less relevant in the future.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, Mayor Russell — mayor? I guess you're Reeve Russell.

Mr Russell: If that goes on your new recommendations, I don't particularly care what I'm called as long as —

The Acting Chair: People should always look for promotions. Thank you for coming down from Chapleau and presenting your views to us today and for a vigorous and thoughtful representation.

Mr Russell: I really appreciate it. Thanks very much, Mr Tascona, Mr Stewart, Mrs Ross, Mr Hardeman, Mr Gilchrist and Mr Danford. I thank you for hearing us, Mr Chair, and I hope it develops something. We'll get our report to you on Monday, I promise. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr Len Wood: Just briefly, based on the comments we've heard from Mr Gilchrist and a number of mayors and reeves, I would like to make a motion that we spend another five or six days in the north taking a look at the boundaries, because we've heard all kinds of comments, including Mr Gilchrist saying that he'd just love to travel more around the north.

I would like to move that we spend more time travelling around through the north into some of these communities that are being drastically affected as a result of the flawed legislation, because we've heard that the federal government has said the legislation at the federal level was flawed. Nobody listened to the boundaries that were being brought. I think it's very important that we get it right this time around and not go on a flawed federal system. In order to do that, I think we need more tours into some of these communities and maybe even up the Hudson Bay and James Bay coasts to listen to the concerns from the remote communities.

1530

The Acting Chair: Mr Wood, would you be amenable to leaving this to the next session of the committee?

Mr Len Wood: Well, we're in the north now. I think we should deal with it in the north.

The Acting Chair: Do we have a seconder?

Mr Bisson: I second the motion, Mr Chair.

The Acting Chair: Debate?

Mr Bisson: Well, I just —

The Acting Chair: Debate? Wake up, gentlemen.

Mr Gilchrist: It's a good thing Hansard actually comes out in a written form, Mr Wood, because what I said was, "Which three cities in the north were selected was up to the opposition." I did not say that the taxpayers of this province have empowered us to continue to have the kind of expense we're incurring to do this, particularly when we've seen today already representatives come in from such a diverse area. We saw it yesterday in the Sault and we certainly did in Dryden, from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba border. A number of people, I think representing every riding or darn near every riding, except maybe the urban ones of Sudbury and North Bay, have made representations before us here today. We know the volume of comments that are coming into our office. It's been on the parliamentary channel now for over two weeks.

Quite frankly, all three parties voted for the agenda, sir, and that is the agenda we have now fulfilled. We look forward to clause-by-clause next week.

The Acting Chair: I just want to remind members, if you want to leave here today some time — Mr Bisson.

Mr Bisson: I don't want to lengthen the debate but, as Mr Gilchrist said, for the purpose of Hansard and for the purpose of the debate, so I hope we can influence the outcome, I would like to mention a couple of things.

As I said earlier, communities like Timmins and Sault Ste Marie, although affected by the decision to redistribute the ridings down by five, are not going to be most severely affected. I think it would only be fair that the committee at least try to go to communities such as Kap or Hearst or Chapleau or Wawa, or whatever it might be, to give those people an opportunity to have a say because

clearly they're going to be the most affected. I think it would only be fair to do so.

This bill will not be before the House for at least another couple of weeks. I understand there are public hearings yet to happen in Toronto in regard to this particular issue.

Mr Danford: No.

Mr Bisson: There are no public hearings in Toronto?

Mr Danford: We had one.

Mr Bisson: You had the Toronto ones? Okay. Then it's even more pressing. I would strongly urge the members of the government, in order to accept to do this, if I could have your attention just for one second — having had the opportunity to sit on both sides of the House, there have been occasions where I've sat on committee on the government side where opposition members from the third party have made requests to extend public hearings into other communities, extend the length of time in communities to allow for additional presenters, and as a government member I've always supported that. We did that on the select committee on Confederation, we did that on the OLRA bill, we did that on the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. There were different cases where we've allowed more presenters to come before us because there were particular facts we wanted to get, and certainly as a government we wanted to make sure we didn't give the impression that we wouldn't be hearing certain people. I would ask you to vote for this on that basis.

Many people who presented here today said, and you should remember this, "I was kind of late because of weather conditions." We had a sprinkling of snow last night and unfortunately the highways are not salted the way they used to be so it's difficult for people to drive the two and three hours to get here. Quite frankly, many people who might like to have been here didn't get a chance to come.

I would ask the members to consider that as a friendly motion and that we decide to go to a couple of communities at the very least, one in the northwest, one in the northeast, other than the major centres. I would ask the government members to support the motion.

The Acting Chair: Further debate?

Mr Stewart: Call the question, Mr Chair.

The Acting Chair: All right: The question be put that there be further meetings held in smaller communities in northern Ontario.

Mr Len Wood: A recorded vote.

The Acting Chair: Those in favour of the closure motion? Opposed?

Mr Bisson: Was that a closure motion? I thought he was going on.

Clerk of the Committee: Mr Stewart moved closure.

Mr Bisson: Oh, I didn't hear closure. When did that happen?

The Acting Chair: Just now.

Mr Bisson: Why would it be closure? You would have a separate vote.

Mr Gilchrist: I was voting on the motion. Let's just hold the vote again.

The Acting Chair: Let's backtrack.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes.

The Acting Chair: On the closure motion.

Mr Gilchrist: No, we don't need a closure motion. There's been no further debate. You asked for further debate and there was none.

The Acting Chair: Mr Stewart, will you withdraw that?

Mr Stewart: It was not a closure, Mr Chairman. I asked to call a question. You asked for more debate and there was not. I asked you to call the question, sir.

The Acting Chair: The clerk says that's a closure motion. Just withdraw that one and we'll have the motion to —

Mr Stewart: Do you want me to remove that so we can grandstand some more? I'll remove it.

The Acting Chair: Mr Wood has a motion that there be consideration given to holding further meetings of this committee in the smaller communities of northern Ontario. I think that captures the essence of the motion.

Mr Len Wood: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Bisson, Sergio, Len Wood.

Nays

Danford, Gilchrist, Hardeman, Ross, Stewart, Tascona.

The Acting Chair: I declare the motion lost.

Mr Bisson: Can I just thank those committee members, in closing, before everybody leaves? Unfortunately we didn't get that vote. I won't debate it; it's done. I want to thank members of the committee for having come to Timmins. It's not every day that we have an opportunity for a standing committee of the government to come to our fair community. We want to thank you for that.

For the people who came and presented, on behalf of those citizens we thank the committee for the opportunity to have our say.

Mr Len Wood: I would just like to add my thank-you to everybody who came to all of northern Ontario.

The Acting Chair: I declare this standing committee adjourned till next Thursday, November 28.

The committee adjourned at 1537.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent PC)
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Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East / -Est L)
*Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)
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Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)
Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich L)
*Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West / -Ouest PC)
*Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview L)
*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
*Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
*Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South / -Sud ND) for Mr Marchese
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Carroll
Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming L) for Mrs Pupatello

Clerk Pro Tem / Greffière par intérim: Ms Donna Bryce

Staff / Personnel: Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Mr Stephen Capaldo, Legislative Interpretation and Translation Service

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Première session, 36^e législature

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Thursday 28 November 1996

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 28 novembre 1996

Standing committee on general government

Fewer Politicians Act, 1996

Labour Union
and Employees Association
Financial Accountability Act, 1996



Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 réduisant
le nombre de députés

Loi de 1996
sur la responsabilité financière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 28 November 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 28 novembre 1996

The committee met at 1009 in committee room 1.

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

The Chair (Mr Jack Carroll): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to clause-by-clause discussion of Bill 81. We now have a quorum, so we can begin. We will move right into section 1.

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): Mr Chair, before we get going, we've just been distributed a motion by Mario Sergio. Will this motion be discussed after these proceedings?

The Chair: I understand that it was his intention that this motion be introduced at the end of the clause-by-clause discussion.

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you.

The Chair: Any discussion on section 1? Shall section 1 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 1 is carried.

Are there any amendments to section 2?

Mr Grandmaître: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(1.1) Section 7 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

"Cross-appointment of federal returning officers

"(13) Despite anything else in this act, the person appointed as returning officer for an electoral district shall be the returning officer appointed under section 14 of the Canada Elections Act for the corresponding federal electoral district."

If it's the purpose of the government to reduce the number of politicians and to save money, we think that having the same returning officers would be a saving for the provincial government. That's why this amendment was introduced.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): We have an amendment here that is going to change the legislation. Our position is that the legislation we have here, and you'll hear more as we go through it, is based on flawed

federal redistribution boundaries. The federal government under Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell set up an election commission to set up boundaries, it was stalled in the Senate and they went back, and when the new Liberal government came in there was some minor tinkering with it. But the overall feeling, on 85% of the land mass in Ontario, is that the federal redistribution, the first one, was flawed and the second one is still flawed.

Although we're supporting the amendment that the Liberals have brought forward, no number of amendments can be made to the existing legislation that are going to satisfy the general population out there. If you're bringing in legislation, you're trying to amend this piece of legislation, which is based on flawed federal redistribution boundaries, no number of amendments or tinkering with this is going to resolve the dilemma we're faced with.

Most of the mayors and reeves and the general population throughout northwestern and northeastern Ontario — as we heard throughout the hearings, there were a lot of presentations, a lot of letters written to the Premier saying to him, "Please don't proceed with this bill the way it is, because it does not take into consideration the accessibility, the diversity of the area in northeastern and northwestern Ontario, the uniqueness of the province." It is flawed, and there's no amount of tinkering or changes to it that it is going to mean we're going to have democracy in Ontario.

What happens at the next federal election if we get Preston Manning as the Prime Minister of Canada and he decides that Ontario should have 200 MPs in Ottawa? Does that mean Ontario will have to go along with a redistribution where you double the number of representatives in Ottawa?

This whole piece of legislation is at the mercy of whatever government is in Ottawa. It's throwing away the right of this government and any future government in Ontario to say how the Ontario Legislature should be represented, whether it be fewer politicians or more politicians.

It's flawed, and in all fairness to democracy in Ontario, the bill should be withdrawn and a proper election committee set up for Elections Ontario to go around the province and listen to people before legislation is brought into the Legislature. This did not happen in this particular case. You have one party that was represented with — 60% of the population in Ontario says they did not want a Conservative government in Ontario but they're stuck with it and they're going to live with it. That doesn't necessarily mean they have to go along with all of the legislation that is being brought in, when only a minority

of the population is being represented by this particular government.

It's a concern I have, and I don't know how much discussion we have to have on this bill before we can get it right so that large groups of people in Ontario are not going to feel left out. We've heard where a few years ago petitions were being passed around trying to form another political party which, in its own right, would form a separate province within Ontario.

We heard again during the hearings that the movement is starting again now, where if Mike Harris and his Conservative people in Toronto are not going to listen to the people in northern Ontario, a movement is coming out of Geraldton; we heard two or three presenters in northeastern and northwestern Ontario saying it's an attack on democracy from within Ontario, that the large geographic masses are going to lose their democratic vote and right in the Legislature and that they're very unhappy with this. They've asked us to do whatever we can with this piece of legislation, which is flawed, that no amount of amendment is going to make it right and make it fair for Ontario and that it should be withdrawn.

But I congratulate the Liberal caucus for bringing this particular amendment forward. I'm sure we'll have more discussion on this and other amendments as we proceed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood. Any further comments? Shall the amendment carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Any further amendments to section 2? Shall section 2 carry?

Comment, Mr Marchese?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): Mr Chairman, I want to speak on the whole section.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr Marchese: This is the most important section, in my view, in this act. I want to, for the record, put my views at this time. I just remind the Conservative members of the motion that M. Villeneuve had introduced in this House a long while ago which reminded us, the Liberal government at the time and the NDP and Conservatives, that Ontario is very diverse and that we should reflect that diversity in the way we establish our boundaries, that we shouldn't diminish the representation of rural members or of northern members. That's something M. Villeneuve stated at the time. Mr Eves, of course, was supportive of that, as were many other illustrious members of the cabinet.

1020

It is a sad reflection of politics that you have a number of now ministers, then MPPs, who held these views, believed them to be correct and held them firmly. While that was the case then, they have now gotten into power as cabinet ministers and they have been effectively muzzled, as I can see; not only muzzled, but their voices have been literally taken away. They have been cut away, asunder. I think that's a problem for them. It's a problem for this Conservative government to deal with.

I'm not sure Mr Villeneuve or Mr Ernie Eves could ever live with the fact that at one time they thought this was very important. Now that Mike Harris believes this not to be important, those voices have been lost and the opinions they held then are no longer opinions they hold

now. I think it's a problem. I think it's a problem for them, as ministers, as members of those ridings, and I think this government will have to somehow live with that. That will become more and more public in their own ridings. They will have to talk to their own public about how they have readjusted the reality, how reality readjusts itself when you're in power versus when you're in opposition. Is that the way it works?

People will not be able to continue to trust politicians when they can change their minds so easily one way or the other. I understand that from time to time politicians can change their minds and need to. I understand we do that and all political parties do that. Some things are very major and some things not so major, but I believe this to be an issue of major proportion.

In representing our Ontario in different ways, I believe we should not say: "Because we have a greater population, we need more politicians, and those who have fewer numbers in their areas, like the north and rural areas, should have fewer, because that's just the way it should be. It's based on one vote per person." We have adjusted that reality in Ontario, in Canada, as a way of making sure that the representation of the rural areas and northern areas is not lost and that their voices are equal to those voices in southern Ontario. I think that's a good reflection of our reality.

How M. Villeneuve squares with that reality now is difficult for me to conceive; how he defends it with his own constituents is difficult for me to conceive; how he has either expressed a view one way or the other in cabinet is again difficult for me to conceive. I'm wondering whether Mr Villeneuve and Mr Ernie Eves had any opinions when this matter was discussed in cabinet, or in fact in their own caucus if caucus had an opportunity to discuss this. I'm not quite sure.

What is clear in my mind is that the Premier made up his mind on this. It was the Premier who decided, "This is what we're going to do, boys," and it got done. It didn't matter that Mr Ernie Eves had an opinion, and it didn't matter that M. Villeneuve had an opinion; it's what Mike Harris thought was important that mattered.

Traditionally where we had commissions to give us opinions about how to do redistribution since 1960, all of a sudden this Conservative, Reform-minded government decides to change that tradition, because they're now in power, they have power absolute, and they can decide how best to do it for the rest of the population. "We don't need a commission that is arm's length to give us advice, which we take or do not take; we're just going to do it," and Mike decided to do it. So these fine members are on this committee today, and cabinet ministers have simply decided, "Okay, this is what the Premier wants."

Of course, there might have been some discussion, some disagreement from some of the members: "Mike, gee, how do we deal with this? This is going to be tough, because when we were in opposition we said one thing, now we're doing another. How do we deal with this, Mikey?" Mikey said: "Well, we promised. It's in the Uncommon Sense Revolution and we have to do it. Boys, you've just got to go and tell the rural folks: 'This is something we're doing for you. We're going to save \$11

million for you and your children and the future of their children.”

So the poor MPPs buckle down and say: “Yeah, Mike, you’re right. It is tough but we’re going to do it for you and defend this to the very end. How do we do it? We’re going to defend it on the basis that we’re going to save you \$11 million in perpetuity, and isn’t that good, because we’re going to deal with the deficit. But Mike, what about the issue of representation, the issue of access, the issue of democracy, the issue of process in terms of how we make these decisions? How do we deal with that?” “Just go back to the constituents and tell them you’re going to save \$11 million. Forget about process. Forget about an arm’s-length commission. We’ve had plenty of those commissions. We don’t need them any more. We’re just going to do it because we believe it to be right.”

Mike Harris — omnipotent, omniscient Mike — decides for the rest of the public, for cabinet and M. Villeneuve, for these other fine MPPs who are here that this is the best course to take. So these poor guys, in their little package of messages to the constituents, have to go back and defend, in my view, a very unwise, dumb move that they are taking.

What have they done with this particular bill? They have satisfied two constituencies: One, Mike Harris and the hirelings he’s got, the gunslingers —

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Gunslingers?

Mr Marchese: — gunslingers, yes — and the other constituency they have satisfied is the Reform-minded constituents who are their supporters. What do they want? Well, they want to get rid of politicians, because they have an antipathy to governments and, to a great extent, an antipathy to politicians. How do they satisfy them? They satisfy them by simply saying, “We’re going to get rid of politicians,” because that’s what they want.

This is really the group of Ontarians they’re satisfying: It’s the Reform elements of Ontario. As far as they’re concerned: “As long as we satisfy this particular constituency, we’ve done our job. It’s irrelevant how we affect the democratic process, how we’ve changed it. It is irrelevant. It is irrelevant how we deal with the whole issue of whether people will have access to us or not, whether people will reach us or not, whether we will be able to reach them.” All of those considerations have become, for this government, irrelevant, because the only consideration they want to satisfy is the consideration of how we please the Reform in Ontario. That’s what this thing is all about.

In my view, this is the most politically crass thing to do. It puts away and undoes so much of what we value when you do something because it will satisfy people in the electorate who have no liking for politicians, no liking for government. They not only mistrust government but they see it as an excessive load they have to carry. These Reform people carry this vision that governments are simply in the way of their own lifestyle and what they need to do. So the more we cut away at politicians and the more we reduce the civil servants in Ontario, the better for them.

That might be all right for those interesting individuals who are out there in Ontario, but a lot of other people are

very unhappy. There are many people in Ontario, different sectors — economic, cultural, linguistic — who will be very, very unhappy with what this government is doing today. I think when they cater to the Reform in Ontario, they diminish democracy for the rest of the population.

They have diminished the role of politicians. They have diminished their role as politicians in particular, but our role generally as politicians, because it creates in the minds of many that we don’t value what we do. The only thing we value as politicians is: “Oh, we have all cut, so we’ve got to show them that we can cut too. We’re going to cut politicians and offer them on the alter as well.” In my view, that’s poor logic, poor reasoning.

I think they believe their logic will make sense to the public. When they say to them, “Everybody else has cut. We’ve cut in government, and we need to cut too,” they think that will be bought, but I believe they have diminished themselves tremendously. As you make these cuts, they are irretrievable. We will never be able to retrieve any of the losses you will have achieved in this term. All of the losses that we will see, witness, experience, will be irretrievable, and this is yet one of those other things that will be lost forever.

1030

They will argue of course that it’s okay, that it’s probably a good thing, but I think it’s a terrible thing. When they cut \$8 billion out of the economy, \$3 billion to be announced soon — they have a problem with that. Poor folks, they just don’t know what to do. The cash isn’t coming in so they had to postpone the economic statement. They have a problem. This \$11 million you’re cutting away from politicians is not going to solve your problem. The sad thing is that you’ve introduced an income tax cut to satisfy your passion to please your wealthy friends. The favourite one for me is the bankers, where the five of them earn — well, they all earn more or less \$1.6 million each, and at the end of the 30% tax cut, they’re going to make \$120,000.

The poor, regular Joe, the Reform-minded Joe out there who supports you will soon realize that the first tax cut you gave him, the 7% tax cut in July — if someone is earning \$25,000, \$30,000, they’re looking in their chequebook and they’re saying: “Jesus, I thought this government said we were getting a tax break. When is it coming? Is it coming yet?” What they don’t realize is that, yes, it has come already. That was last July and it was 7%, but it’s not there. They may have gotten seven pennies, so they look through and maybe they might check back to see whether or not there’s a vast difference between the old cheque and the new one, and there’s no difference because it’s in the pennies, maybe in the dollars.

Most Ontarians whose wages are going down and who are making a lot less — and will under your government year after year — will not even see the next 7% cut. So 7.5% and 7.5% is 15%, right? Your banker friends are going to be delighted that you’ve given them a few extra bucks, because they need it. They’re only making \$1.5 million, some of them \$1.9 million, so they want a little more and they thank you for giving them a little more. But the other poor guys, those who are making \$25,000,

\$30,000, they're not going to see it, and the next 7.5%, they're not going to see that either. That 20 bucks they might get will have disappeared in all the user fees they've got to pay. The poor seniors will have to pay it in the drug plan.

When you give this tax cut, you will have lost \$6 billion to \$10 billion. Some people say \$20 billion — I think it's exaggerated — but \$6 billion to \$10 billion will have been sifted away from our coffers to give to people who don't need it. The real people who spend are the ones who make \$25,000, \$30,000, \$35,000, \$40,000. Those are the people who spend. They're not going to see it. So you've got a problem. You have created chaos in Ontario with a tax cut, in particular with the elimination of your \$8 billion away from our coffers generally.

Mr Hardeman: What part of the bill is this? I thought we were talking about Bill 81, Mr Chair.

Mr Len Wood: It's on section 2 of the bill. That's what he's addressing.

The Chair: Mr Marchese has the floor.

Interjection: He is addressing that?

Mr Len Wood: Section 2 of Bill 81, yes.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I think we're talking about Bill 81.

Mr Len Wood: Bill 81. He's right on topic.

Mr Marchese: Absolutely. I'm linking it in.

The tax cut you have given away will just sift away in this big Tory sift. It will just sift away into oblivion, but mostly to the rich. Mikey has discovered in his own logic that he can say, "That's okay, because however the money gets out there, it's going to be reinvested." What a guy. He's helping everybody out. "It doesn't matter" — he says — "how that money gets out, it's all going to be invested." So we on this side say, "Yes, if you gave it to the poor, or the working poor who are making \$25,000, \$30,000, they would spend the money, but if they're not going to get any money, they're not going to spend it on anything." What does the wealthy banker do? Do you think he needs a new fridge?

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Hell no.

Mr Marchese: I don't think he needs a new fridge. Do you think he needs a new stove? I don't think he needs a new stove.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): It's the Liberals who get the new fridges.

Mrs Pupatello: Let's talk about the Office of the Premier and the increase in the cost of the Office of the Premier.

Mr Marchese: I won't have time for that.

Mrs Pupatello: Make sure you link that in.

Mr Grandmaitre: Now, now.

Mr Marchese: The bankers already have all of their —

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: I didn't hear that, Joe. You should make sure I hear.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): Just for the record, Mr Chairman, there seems to be a conversation between Ms Pupatello and Mr Marchese.

The Chair: Yes. Mr Marchese, I'd appreciate it if you'd direct your comments to the Chair.

Mr Marchese: Absolutely. It was just a side remark. It was just momentary, really.

Mr Young: He was asking her advice, Mr Chair.

Mr Marchese: She's linking things for me and I appreciate that.

We've got a problem of this income tax cut that's disappearing to the wealthy, and it will not come back. Mike says it will; we say it won't. Now, all of you can smugly say, "It will come back and don't worry," but it's not coming back. The unemployment rate is at 10%. The bond folks love it, because the higher the unemployment, the greater their profits.

Banks: Have you noticed the banks? They have made record profits. Every four or five months, they keep on coming back with greater profits, using our money yet, because 90% of the banks' money is ours. I invest in a credit union, but the public invests in banks. Ninety per cent of their money is ours and they're making more money with our money, and they say, "It's the private investor that's doing that." No, it's the public sector that's investing that money.

The bond people are happy, banks are really happy, and look at this: The banks are now giving to charity. Isn't that nice? They're giving more money to charity. They're looking good, the CIBC. They look nervous about making such huge profits and not giving some back.

The point I make is that we are in a real sad state of affairs where this government is dragging the economy down even more. Unemployment is high, wages are going down, rents are going up — I'll talk about that in a second, if I can link it in. How does this income tax cut, to link it in here, help the economy? I'm arguing that it's not helping the economy. It's not. In January, when we get the 7.5% cut as well, we will see that it will be a greater drag on the economy.

Because of this income tax cut, this government has come up with all sorts of loony ideas to get some money. They come up with this Bill 81 to make a few extra bucks: \$11 million. Just the money we're giving to the bankers would have dealt with that; if we didn't do that, we wouldn't have needed this bill. We have to come up with these loony ideas to deal with the deficit. We say to them, if you've got a deficit problem, why are you giving money back to the wealthiest Ontarians? Whose needs are you satisfying when you give an income tax cut? Because you have created an economic disaster in this country, you come up with loony ideas like this. They're going to cut 27 MPPs to satisfy, largely, this problem of the income tax cut to satisfy the needs of wealthy Canadians.

I tell you, it's laughable, but usually when I laugh it's tragic, because it's not just laughing at something that's funny. It's a tragedy we're witnessing here, and a play will be written about this government, have no fear about that.

Anyway, boys, with this particular move you're disfranchising the north. You are giving them very little representation, less representation. You have created constituencies in the north that are greater than many countries in the world. That's what you've done. No doubt some of you have some suggestions about how to help these poor northerners from now on, but you are

creating ridings that are incredibly huge. I'm not sure how those members are going to be able to service the needs of those constituents. I'm not really sure how those constituents are going to be able to reach you.

The beauty of it is that they won't be able to reach them. The beauty is that this government won't elect any Conservative members up there and they'll continue to elect either NDPers or Liberals, so in their minds, it doesn't really matter, because they won't have to worry about representing the north or all those constituencies, because they never get elected anyway. This will make sure that they never get elected, so if they don't get elected, they don't have to worry about the fact that those poor constituents are never going to be able to speak to those members.

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That's really what has happened. When the Chair or the clerk ask, "Are there any amendments?" — how do you amend an act that's loony, not just flawed but loony? You can't amend it, except to repeal the loony act. We could have done that amendment, actually: repeal the loony act. That would have made sense.

This government has done some loony stuff, so what do they say then? They say: "The federal government has done their redistribution of boundaries. We're just doing what they're doing." That's great logic. Federal governments do their redistribution based on their own needs. Provincial governments should do the same. Replicating it or using it as a front or a foil to make their loony changes is not a very intelligent thing to do. It doesn't go well with most of the public, that I'm aware of. I think most people realize that it's foolish to argue, "Because the feds have done this in this way, we're just doing what they've done, and why do it again?"

Well, we are a province. We're a province that has its own needs to take care of. Why should we stupidly say, "The feds have done this, so we're going to do what they've done just to make it easy for ourselves"? That doesn't take care of the north. It doesn't take care of rural Ontario at all, and it decimates Metro too in terms of the loss of seats.

We have fewer representatives in this assembly than do most other provinces in Canada, in spite of their numbers. We have greater numbers and we will have fewer representatives. Other provinces have fewer people and more representatives. How do you square with that? "Ah," say the Conservative Reform-minded members, "we're leading. At some point we need to lead."

Mikey has led this great charge with this great loony bill to show the public that sometimes you're just going to have to take the bull by the horns and lead, and that's what Mikey has done with this particular bill: He's leading, he's showing the rest of Canada that you can cut the numbers, that you can reduce politicians. "Don't worry, representation is not lost. Access is not lost. Democracy is not lost, because we can serve you well. We're going to run this as a business." That's the new slogan of this government. "We're going to run this as a business."

Well, we say business doesn't care about people. Most of the time, it cares about profits. That's really what it cares about. If it has to fire people, it's going to fire them

in order to make its profits. This government says, "In order to deal with the deficit, we're going to have to fire 20,000 people." And what's next? What's coming next is a reduction of people's salaries. Not only have they fired up to 20,000 people — I say it'll be in the range of 25,000 by the time this government leaves — but they're also going to take money away from them, again to deal with the deficit, again to deal with that stupid income tax cut they have implemented to satisfy the needs of their ideology and their wealthier friends.

They're acting as a business. Business, in my view, might suit the Tories, as it does, in terms of what they're doing, but it doesn't suit the needs of the population. Business doesn't give a damn about the needs of poor people, about the needs of children, about the needs of the unemployed, about the needs of the terrible working conditions that people might be in, about the fact that wages are going down while their profits are going up. Business doesn't give a damn about them. But this government is acting consistently like a business, because that's who they are. By and large, most of these folks here are business people, and their ideology is very much the same.

This will give more power to Mike Harris, the Premier, not less. Mr Tascona argued this on a program we were on together, and other members here argue that they're going to have more power, that because their ridings are going to be bigger, they're going to have more power. Well, the only power they're going to have is to represent 20% more of a riding. If they feel more powerful with that, that's great, but it gives them no power vis-à-vis the Premier, it gives them no power vis-à-vis the cabinet and the gunslingers they hire. You will have less power, and you know now you have no power, you know it now — quite true. You'll deny it, because that's the public persona you've got to give us, but you have no power at the moment, and when there are 27 MPPs fewer you will have less power. Power will be more concentrated in the hands of the Premier and his staff, by and large, and some cabinet ministers.

When you go out to the public and say, "No, we're going to have more power to represent you," it's a big deception, because that will not happen. It isn't true. More and more power will shift away from MPPs into the hands of the Premier's office.

I could go on a little longer, but I think I've put my views for the record in opposition to Bill 81. I'm looking forward to some discussion from the other members because I'm interested in hearing what they have to say. I would like to engage them in that dialogue and I hope it happens.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese. Mr Wood.

Mr Marchese: No response?

Mr Len Wood: On section 2, some of my comments might be directed strictly for your benefit, Mr Chair. I know you would have liked to be up to hear some of the presentations in northern Ontario, but another person took your place as Chair. I think it's important that we get some of the comments on the record because they might not have been related to you as accurately as some would like.

The feeling throughout not only northern Ontario but a lot of places throughout Ontario is that this is not "one size fits all." It's not one shoe size that all the electoral boundaries can be changed to and is going to fit. The federal system, as I said before, was flawed. The feeling was that the population had grown in BC and they needed a couple more representatives in British Columbia, and in southern Ontario the population had grown and they were going to put three additional members on in southern Ontario to compensate for the increase in population. They decided, with all the lobbying going on in front of the electoral commission, "We should have four in southern Ontario, so we've got to take one out of the north," and now we see the same system being followed in the redistribution of the ridings here.

We heard all kinds of presentations from all across Ontario, especially in the north that simple representation by population — we heard some of the comments from some of the Conservative members that we should get closer to representation by population. It's not happening at the federal level; it's not going to happen under Bill 81 at the provincial level. Representation should not be based on population alone. There has to be the geography and the demographic — all the democratic system has to be taken into consideration when you talk about representation.

On This Hour Has 22 Minutes on TV the other day, they said that Mike Harris's shoes are too tight and his head is screwed on the wrong way. This is basically the way this legislation seems to be put together. There was no consideration for the land mass, the resources or the geographic area of the province. It was strictly a matter of saying, "Well, the Conservatives in Ottawa started the process, the Liberals finished the process, and now we're going to do exactly the same thing in Ontario."

We think it's flawed and wrong. You're talking not only the land and the population in northern Ontario; millions and millions of dollars every week are coming out of the renewable resources into the coffers at Queen's Park. We not only have the renewable resources putting in millions of dollars but we have the non-renewable resources from mining that are putting millions and millions of dollars back into the coffers at Queen's Park. In this particular case you're talking about a saving of possibly \$2 million or \$2.5 million by reducing the representation in northern Ontario from 15 members to 10 members.

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The representations that we heard throughout the north were saying, "Don't do it; it's wrong." If you take away five of the watchdogs that are up there — and they're helping to manage these resources. It doesn't matter which political party they come from, whether they're Conservative, Liberal or NDP, they have an obligation to oversee these resources to make sure they are there for generations to come.

If you take that few-million-dollar saving out of northeastern and northwestern Ontario and you put it all in Mike Harris's office with additional staff — and I understand that this is what is happening. He's increasing his staff because he's finding the workload is just too great. He had to move out of the north, from North Bay

he moved into Toronto, and even with that he's got to add thousands of dollars in extra staff.

You're taking the rights of the legally and democratically elected representatives and you're turning that over to paid staff. How do the mayors and reeves and the general population get their concerns heard if they can't speak to the democratically elected representatives the way they've been able to do in the past? They were led down the garden path back in 1992 by quite a few people making representations from the Conservative Party at that time, saying that geographic areas have to be taken into consideration, northern Ontario is special. "If we get elected as a Conservative government, we're going to be a voice for the north."

Now they're saying, "The voice for the north is not there; it's gone." Nobody's listening to the people in northern Ontario. All the money that was supposed to go up there from the heritage board — we see announcements coming out, "There's \$210 million that's going to be spent over four years in the heritage money for northern Ontario." We've seen one announcement in 18 months, which deals with some \$940,000 for promoting tourism. That's the only money that has been spent.

All previous governments since the heritage board was implemented put \$25 million or \$30 million back into northern Ontario from the heritage fund to protect existing jobs, to create new jobs, so that the north would grow. Now we see all of the money coming down to promote and to be spent on whatever Mike Harris feels is important. A lot of it, as my colleague has said, is being spent on a tax break for the wealthy and powerful people in Ontario who paid big dollars to the Conservative campaign to get members elected, and a lot of that money is coming from the poor.

It's basically Robin Hood in reverse. Robin Hood used to take from the rich and give to the poor. Now we see taking from the poor and giving to the rich. It's just completely different from what was happening years ago. I've talked to all kinds of people who found their food and their clothing allowance and their rent allowance, 22% being taken away a couple months after this government was elected. They say, "The wealthy and the rich and the upper-income people got a 7% increase, and yet I didn't get one."

I'm hoping that you, Mr Chair, will use some common sense and get the word back to Mike and his people, that there is a lot of uneasiness. There are a lot of hard feelings that a bill is being brought forward with a phoney or a silly name on it. The short title of it is the Fewer Politicians Act. When people think about fewer politicians, they think about democracy being eroded. The watchdogs that are out there to look after and keep an eye on the bureaucracy and what the Premier is doing, if you took away those people then you're slowly ending up whittling that down to a point where you're going to have two or three people dictating what they can do in Ontario and not listening to anybody. To me, that's wrong; it's not the democratic way to go.

People feel that they want proper representation, no matter where they live in Ontario, and they do not want representation by population alone. We heard that loud and clear from representations from everybody around the

province. It's not by population now; it never was by population; it never will be strictly by population in the future. Nobody is going to be able to do that. If you go with population, eventually you'd end up with one or two members in northern Ontario and the rest all centred around a little bit of southern Ontario, which was all clear-cut years ago to make room for population expansion in the large urban cities.

In northern Ontario we don't have that. We have a kind of uniqueness, a beautiful part of the province, and we need more democratically elected representatives to continue their role in government. I don't know how much time is being set aside for debate on this particular piece of legislation, amendments and debate in the House, but the people in this province feel that it's flawed no matter how many amendments are brought forward unless the legislation is rewritten and control is brought back within Ontario.

We don't allow Ottawa to call the shots in Ontario. Ontario is a special province; it's one of the most populous provinces in Canada. As I pointed out earlier, if Preston Manning were to become the Prime Minister of Canada and decide that after the next election he wants to have 200 people from Ontario in Ottawa, does that mean we're going to have 200 people representing Ontario at Queen's Park?

This is what the legislation says. Whoever the Prime Minister or the people in Ottawa, no matter which government is there, we're going to do exactly what they're doing. I think it's wrong. I think Ontario is a special province and we shouldn't allow this control to be turned over to the federal government when you're talking about the peanuts — we're talking about peanuts, a few million dollars — that are going to be saved.

Some are arguing, "Well, it's going to set an example if we cut out the politicians." The message I'm getting is that it's not going to show an example. It's going to show that there are fewer watchdogs out there watching what's happening with the bureaucracy or the paid people at Queen's Park. If you continue to lose more and more elected representatives, what kind of democracy are we going to end up with in Ontario? With that, I'd be curious and interested to hear some of the comments from the Conservative members as to why they think this legislation might be good for Ontario. I haven't heard any arguments as yet, so I'll leave it at that for now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood. I appreciate your bringing me up to date on what I missed by not being able to get up north last weekend.

Mr Grandmaître: I'll be very brief. I want to show my disappointment to the members of the government for not addressing this amendment, for voting against this amendment without any real reason. I think I gave you an opportunity to save more money. The reason why this legislation is before us today is to not only reduce the number of politicians in the province, but it's also to make savings. I didn't sit in, Mr Chair, on every one of your meetings but some members have a lot to say about this piece of legislation. I realize there was a promise made by the government when the Common Sense Revolution was introduced. We were told at that time that

the number of politicians would be reduced to 99, and now it's 103.

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I am told that the federal government, on January 7 or 8, if I'm not mistaken, will again bring in some amendments to some ridings in Ontario. My riding will be affected, not a great deal, but again the fact is that the provincial government didn't consult with the federal government. This was done in spite of all the objections of provincial politicians and people from my own riding objecting to this kind of, let's say, forced change, with very little consultation. When I look at representation, it doesn't matter at what level, even at the municipal level, I think it's very important that we think about people. After all, we do represent people and we have a responsibility towards our people. Now, with this kind of legislation that's before us, we will have less representation and maybe fewer dollars to respond to the needs of our taxpayers. I think it's very unfair.

I know that later on an amendment will be introduced to make sure that if this piece of legislation goes through — and I'm sure it will go through for the simple reason that the government has not introduced any amendments and they're determined to go through with this thing. What you see is what we're going to get, and this kind of attitude is unacceptable. I want to show my disappointment towards the members of the government for not showing any interest whatsoever in improving the legislation. We realize it's a majority government, but at the same time I think we have a responsibility to represent our people in the best way we can. We feel that reducing the number of members does not reflect the democracy that has been around in this province for so many decades.

I think we should carry on and do whatever we have to do this morning, and let's hope that some members of the government will at least address some of the amendments.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Grandmaître. Any further discussion on section 2? All those in favour of section 2? Opposed? Section 2 is carried.

Are there any amendments to section 3?

Mr Grandmaître: We have an amendment, but I would ask to stand down section 3 at this time and we'll bring it later.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to stand down section 3? Okay.

Are there any amendments to section 4? Any discussion on section 4? All those in favour of section 4? Opposed? Section 4 is carried.

Are there any amendments to section 5? Any discussion on section 5? Shall section 5 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 5 is carried.

Are there any amendments to section 6? Any discussion on section 6? Shall section 6 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 6 is carried.

We now move into the schedules. Are there any amendments to section 1 in the schedule?

Mr Grandmaître: I move that the Representation Act, 1996, as set out in the schedule to the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Representation Act, 1996

"Provincial electoral districts

"1. (1) For the purpose of representation in the Legislative Assembly, Ontario is divided into the following electoral districts:

"1. In northern Ontario,

"i. the electoral districts of Kenora, Rainy River, Fort William, Port Arthur, Lake Nipigon, Sault Ste Marie, Algoma, Algoma-Manitoulin, Sudbury East, Sudbury, Nickel Belt, Cochrane North and Cochrane South as described in the Representation Act,

"ii. the electoral district of Timiskaming, consisting of the territorial district of Timiskaming, and

"iii. the electoral district of Nipissing, consisting of the territorial district of Nipissing, except that part of it that is assigned to the new federal electoral district of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke by the representation order of 1996 published under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (Canada).

"2. In southern and eastern Ontario, the electoral districts of Parry Sound-Muskoka and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the remaining electoral districts to the south, as described and named in the representation order of 1996 published under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (Canada).

"One member per district

"(2) One member shall be returned to the assembly for each electoral district."

Basically what this amendment is all about is that at the present time northern Ontarians have 15 ridings, and we would like to maintain those 15 ridings. I'm sure that my colleague Mr Gravelle has quite a bit to say on this amendment.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): This amendment, in essence, gives all members of this committee, and particularly the government members, to basically recognize that in the public hearings that took place in northern Ontario in Dryden, Sault Ste Marie and Timmins representation was made very strongly to try to explain, particularly to the government side, what the realities are of being a northern member and how, in terms of fair representation and giving people an opportunity to be fairly represented, reducing the number of ridings as recommended in the bill that is now before us is simply something that needs to be changed.

You can go through it riding by riding. Probably the best example of a situation that needs to be changed is the two ridings of Kenora and Rainy River being essentially amalgamated into one riding. The distances are extraordinary. I think everybody knows about the fact that this riding will be essentially one third the size of the province. May I say too that the riding of Lake Nipigon, a huge riding already, essentially is disappearing, in fact is disappearing, and will be amalgamated largely with the Port Arthur riding.

Among the members who did travel to the north, I want to believe that there was a serious intention, certainly on behalf of the members of the government, to listen and to learn and recognize what it means to represent a northern riding; the fact that you can be in a situation where you are representing perhaps not the same number

of people but people who require representation just as fairly as anybody else but who are 300 kilometres away.

The Lake Nipigon riding is an example that I'm probably most familiar with simply because they have spoken to me very strongly. I think it's unfortunate that we didn't get the opportunity to having hearings in the Lake Nipigon riding. I was very keen for us to get up to Geraldton or Longlac or Beardmore or Nipigon or Terrace Bay or Schreiber, Red Rock, Marathon, Manitowadge, just so people could recognize what the realities are.

All members here who know the job they're doing recognize that it's a big job representing the people, because people do want to have access to their members of Parliament, despite the fact some of the members of the Conservative caucus seem to think that things can be done by telephone or by fax. They need to recognize that in northern Ontario there are constituents who literally, in unorganized territories, don't have access to those particular means, including telephones. They also need to recognize that those of us who represent the north are very conscious of the fact that the constituents want to have personal contact with the member. Certainly I feel strongly about that; I know that all the northern members do. I know Mr Wood certainly feels that way, and all the northern members do, and certainly I think all the members of our caucus, and presumably the Conservative caucus as well, want to do that as well, have as much access to their constituents as possible.

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The fact is, if you look at the riding situation now with the 15 ridings, there are huge ridings already, and there is an extraordinary effort put out by all the members to try to be in as many places as possible.

One of the examples that was used when we were in Dryden was the situation on Remembrance Day, where the attendance of the provincial member is certainly desired, if not required, in Kenora, Rainy River, let alone in the new riding of Thunder Bay-Nipigon, if that's what it will be called. There are 12 different communities that are having 12 separate ceremonies, and obviously the member would have some difficulty getting to all 12. In fact, it's impossible.

Mr Young: You can't go now.

Mr Gravelle: I'm sorry?

Mr Young: You can't go to all of them now.

Mr Gravelle: Well, quite frankly, Mr Young, that is my point.

Mr Marchese: It will be worse.

Mr Gravelle: That is exactly the point: We can't get to them all now. I thank you for making that interjection, because quite frankly that simply speaks to the amendment. In the amendment, we're not asking for more ridings, we're asking to maintain the ridings. As I said, Mr Wood will certainly back me up on this and all the northern members do, as well as our colleagues who understand that reality, the fact that you can't get there now. It seems to me that, having been up in Dryden, as many of you were, and being in Sault Ste Marie and Timmins, these facts should have some effect on you.

In essence, there is no question that a lot of the points that Mr Wood made earlier are completely valid as well

in terms of what northern Ontario brings and offers to the province and the resources that go down and the money that goes down to the provincial coffers.

The fact is that you may view us as being members who make a lot of noise and speak our minds very clearly about our feelings on this, and that is because we see the situation that is developing with this bill, where what you're saying to the people of northern Ontario is: "We don't think you're as important. We don't think it matters as much. We think your ridings, which are large already, we can just double the size of them. What's the difference?"

As Mr Young just said, you can't get to all the events you want to get to now. What's the difference? Well, the difference is that it's important to us to try and get to them. I appreciate that some members approach their jobs in a different fashion, but it is important to us and it's certainly important to our constituents that we have communication and a relationship with those constituents.

This amendment, quite frankly, allows the government an opportunity to basically amend this bill in a fashion that will recognize that indeed the situation now is that there is the north, and one would argue it's under-represented, but certainly the north needs to be treated in a manner that recognizes that the distance and the travel and the ability of people to get to meet their provincial member is already very difficult.

There were many examples used at the hearings, and one of them was the whole question, literally, of bus transportation. Just simply being able to take the bus from Marathon, Ontario, to Thunder Bay, Ontario, which is a distance of 300 kilometres — and Marathon is a major community in northern Ontario, you know; there are 5,000 people, it's near the Hemlo gold mines, it's got a pulp and paper mill. The fact is that Marathon is an important community, and the representative of that community would very much want to spend as much time there as possible. But if the constituent needed to travel from Marathon to Thunder Bay, it's an \$80 return bus fare. Obviously, as the member, it would be difficult to get there a lot. I've certainly spoken to the present member, Mr Pouliot, a great deal about this, and we have a very common understanding of the difficulties in trying to meet all those needs as it is.

I hope this amendment will be taken seriously, and I hope there will be some comment from the government side on this, because although we recognize that restructuring or redistribution as a process should legitimately go on, probably after every second census or the full census, recognize the need for changes, the fact is that there's always been a recognition by most fairminded people that indeed the north is not overrepresented. Northern members are well known for expressing their viewpoint very strongly, but that is because we have to do that in order to be heard.

To take away one third of the seats in northern Ontario and to basically not acknowledge what the realities are for the people who are representing those ridings, let alone the constituents — there was a point made, in Dryden again I recall, and it was a question of MPPs trying to basically preserve their ridings. The point needs to be made that the ridings do not belong to the MPPs.

This isn't about me or my colleagues or maintaining the seats; what it's about is the fact that the ridings belong to the people of the province, certainly the people of northern Ontario. The members are simply temporary occupants of that position.

It's incumbent on us to do our best to convince the government members today that indeed this amendment, which would simply maintain the number of seats in northern Ontario, is one that would be responsible and is one that would recognize the realities and the difficulties there are for constituents to basically feel they're well represented.

The fact is that all of us will continue to work hard and represent our constituents as well as we can. In some ways I think we will probably be more tenacious in our feelings if this amendment is not passed. But I do hope, based on your experiences in the north and previous experiences on other committees, there would be some recognition, at the very least, that this amendment and what it stands for has some real legitimacy. It's not a question of asking for more; it's a question of asking for simply the appropriate level of respect from this government.

There is a very strong feeling developing across this province, and certainly in northern Ontario, that this government does not care about the interests of many of the people in this province, that everybody is divided up into interest groups. I really hope, again based on the experiences you had at the hearings and the people you listened to, who I think spoke in an objective manner about how seriously they take this process, you seriously look at this and you recognize that the need for representation in the north is one that should not be diminished and at least recognize that if it is diminished, it is perhaps one of the flaws in this bill.

We all know, and probably many of you would agree, there are a lot of flaws in this bill. There's no question the process should have been done on a provincial basis rather than simply following the map of the federal members, recognizing, as again so many presentations made clear, that the kinds of cases, the kinds of businesses that come forward to a provincial member are really quite different than those that go to a federal member of Parliament, and I certainly mean no disrespect to our federal members.

I have worked for federal members of Parliament in the past, and I ran a constituency office. I recognize what the activities are. Having been a provincial member now for a year and a half and having had some experience with the kinds of cases and interests that come forward in terms of health, education, and the list goes on and on, I think it's true and it's very clear that, generally speaking, the people you represent feel closer to you than they do to their federal member in terms of the issues at hand. That case was brought forward. That case was made very strongly in the public hearings in Thunder Bay and in the north, in Dryden, Sault Ste Marie and Timmins. I hope there would be some recognition.

One of the things that makes people feel rather cynical about the process is to hold public hearings and to, in advance, say that there will be no changes as a result of these hearings. I know that one particular member was

quoted in exactly that fashion, which did offend people in the north because I think we wanted to believe that, indeed, there would be some flexibility based on what they heard at the hearings.

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Certainly this amendment very much responds to what was heard in those three communities and only the three communities that you were able to go to. Obviously, if we had had the opportunity we would have wanted the committee to travel to many more communities, although I can pretty well assure you I think the message would have been the same. It was, in essence, a plea from the people of northern Ontario that to maintain their number of ridings is the right thing to do. It's something that elsewhere in the province would be considered a fair thing to do, and I hope you will take this amendment very seriously and support it.

Mr Len Wood: Mr Gravelle has made a good description of what he sees happening in the north, and I noticed during your presentation there were a lot of long faces and sadness, looking on the Conservative members on the other side, so they probably will support this particular amendment.

In any event, I want to add a few comments to this particular section of the bill. We were up through the north and I spent time in Dryden and in Timmins, and the presentations that were being made were a plea for somebody that would listen. I can remember, I believe it was, the reeve of Chapleau calling the names around the table and saying: "How come the government doesn't have any representatives on the committee from northern Ontario? How come these people are all from the heavily populated area in southern Ontario and they're coming up here to northern Ontario and being very aggressive in their comments against the presenters?" I'm still getting feedback from that. Some of them felt they were being attacked by the government members in their presentation.

All they were doing was giving an emotional plea: "Please, don't keep slapping us around any more, as we've been slapped around for the last 18 months, by the reduction to municipalities of dollars, reductions to health care, reductions to education, further reductions coming up again." Some of the municipalities are saying, "We're down now. We don't have any more staff left. We've laid off all the staff. What do we do? Do we just declare bankruptcy in the municipalities?"

Now we're not going to have any proper representation at the provincial level. We had what we considered to be a minimum amount of 15 elected members from all different political parties over the years. It wasn't always just represented by Liberal or NDP members. I can recall a number of years ago where my riding was represented by two Conservative members. One represented the area for about 25 years. So it's not because most of these ridings are represented by Liberal or NDP now. I'm sure we've had former members of Parliament that came in front of the committee and made representation and said: "Please, don't ram this bill through the Legislature because it's going to reduce the amount of watchdogs that are there. It's going to create problems for the elected members."

It doesn't matter which political stripe you have when you leave Queen's Park on a Thursday night and you are heading into your riding but you end up in Ogoki or Peawanuck, and you get a snowstorm and you can't get out of that area until Sunday night or Monday morning, and you have to end up back down at Queen's Park, and in the process you leave your wife and a couple of small kids at home, probably for two weeks, or it could end up three weeks, at a time.

Now they're saying, "We're going to increase the area that these members are going to have to represent," and it's very unfair that this is happening. As I said earlier, it's not representation by population; it's strictly a matter of adding on more land mass to these particular areas. We know that the difference in representation, even with this bill, is going to be as much as 50,000 or 60,000 voters difference between some areas of southern Ontario and northern Ontario because, based on the census reports, we know that some areas are really exploding in population. The redistribution at the federal level is probably not going to happen for another 10 years, so you're never going to end up with representation by population, but in northern Ontario it's very difficult.

I lived in southern Ontario for quite a few years, and I know personally going around to visit just my family, brothers and sisters and cousins, I can drive through a large number of ridings in a day and still have time to have a visit with the family and get back to my home in the same day. You cannot do that in northern Ontario. When you're talking about the new riding of Timmins-James Bay, which is going to replace Cochrane North, it's 760 kilometres from one end to the other, and it's physically impossible to be able to do that in one day and be able to talk to people.

Some of the people have called me and have sent me faxes saying: "Does this saving mean I'm going to have water and sewers installed in the community so that we can get rid of the outdoor houses that we have right now for the treatment of sewage? Does that mean I won't have to go down to the river with a pail to pick up water that I need for cooking and eating?" If you're going to save \$11 million in MPPs, are these conditions going to change for some of the people in the towns within my riding? Because these conditions exist.

When you go into some of the communities and you want to make a phone call, you end up with some areas where there are eight, nine, 10 or 12 people on a party line. You finish your conversation and you just keep the phone to your ear and you hear all the other phones hanging up at the same time. We had that in southern Ontario when I lived there on the farm for a number of years, but it still exists in a lot of parts of northern Ontario. The technology is not there.

Is some of the money that's being saved going to go back in to improve these conditions, or is it just going to go to add extra staff to Mike Harris's office at Queen's Park so he can send his paid workers out to spread his message? Others are saying, "If it's going to the tax break" — which we think it is, a 30% tax break, borrowed money, about \$5 billion a year — "what benefits are we going to have by losing our representation, all that money going to a tax break?"

Are the conditions going to improve in some of these areas? You can't use a fax machine. You can't use the technology that you have by hooking up a computer to the lines because we don't have Bell Telephone as they have in southern Ontario. We have Northern Telephone and, in some cases, we still have municipalities that have their own telephone systems. Is that money going to improve those conditions and improve the telecommunications?

We've heard some of the members of the Conservative caucus saying, "You don't have to go out and meet with your constituents. Just talk to them on the Internet or get them to fax back and forth," and it does not work. We have to go out and meet with these people individually or as groups and, as I said before, talking to them on a party line when you know there are six or eight other families, whether it be teenagers or whether it be the parents themselves, listening on the line, you don't feel comfortable talking about personal problems that they need assistance with through the bureaucracy. These are concerns.

We're moving on this particular legislation to please one particular person in Ontario, and it seems like a lot of the other Conservative backbench members are saying, "If I don't agree with Mike Harris, am I ever going to get into cabinet?" So everybody seems to be saying: "Yes, it sounds good. It was a promise that was made during the election campaign."

It doesn't make any sense to attack northern Ontario or attack some of the rural areas in southern Ontario and slap these people around where you're going to end up with constituents farther and farther away from their member of Parliament. Now some of them feel that they're far enough away, probably too far as it is. This was the feeling of the Conservative caucus back in 1992 when they had 18 or 19 members in the Legislature. The resolutions that were coming forward said: "No, we don't want representation at Queen's Park strictly by population. We want to do it by geography and we want to make sure that that happens."

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I support the amendment that's being brought forward and I think, in all fairness, we should be getting support for this particular amendment because even if it only affects northern Ontario you're talking about \$2.5 million. It doesn't make any sense to shut people out of the system and not allow them to have their voice with their MPP as often as they would like, all for the sake of saving \$2.5 million or \$3 million and, on the other hand, turning around and giving about \$5 billion to the wealthiest people in Ontario, the directors of banks and the people who are making \$1 million.

They get a big tax break, but the people who are making \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year, by the time they pay the increased user fees on garbage, the increase in the parking meters, the increase on all the user fees that are out there, the seven pennies that they get are used up along with some more. Even if they do get another 7.5% reduction in income tax on January 1, it's not going to compensate for the less representation that they're going to get, it's not going to put money in their pockets and it's not going to improve their living conditions.

Even when we were in government during the five years, I used to get into arguments with some of my own colleagues when they would say, "I want to get the sidewalk improved in a certain area and I want to get pavement." I'm saying: "You've got sidewalks? You've got pavement? You've probably got water and sewers running along the streets. In my area we have towns where you have a community tap out in the middle of the street that freezes up six months of the year." These are towns within northern Ontario. Are the savings you're saying you need going to go back in to improve the living conditions in some of these communities, or are they going to continue to exist the way they are?

Mr Young: Is this anything to do with the bill? Are we talking about Bill 81?

Mr Len Wood: I know some of the Conservative members may want to speak on this, so at this point I'll give them an opportunity to voice their concerns with Bill 81 and this particular amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood. Any further discussion on the proposed new schedule?

Mr Len Wood: Oh, silence on the other side.

The Chair: All those in favour of the proposed new schedule? All those against? That proposed new schedule is defeated.

Mr Gravelle: I just find it incredible that the government members would not respond in any manner at all to a very serious amendment. I just think it shows the absolute disregard and lack of respect they have for —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Gravelle. Mr Grandmaître, did you have another proposal for the schedule?

Mr Grandmaître: Yes. I move that the Representation Act, 1996, as set out in the schedule to the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"Provincial electoral districts

"1. (1) For the purpose of representation in the Legislative Assembly, Ontario is divided into the following electoral districts:

"1. The electoral districts of Huron, Bruce and Grey as described in the Representation Act.

"2. The electoral district of Simcoe West, consisting of the part of the county of Simcoe that is assigned to the new federal electoral district of Simcoe-Grey by the representation order of 1996 published under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (Canada).

"3. The electoral district of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington, consisting of the county of Dufferin and the parts of the country of Wellington and the regional municipality of Peel that are assigned to the new federal electoral district of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey by the representation order referred to in paragraph 2.

"4. The remaining electoral districts of southern, eastern and northern Ontario, as described and named in the representation order referred to in paragraph 2.

"One member per district

"(2) One member shall be returned to the assembly for each electoral district."

Arguments that were espoused for the protection of the 15 ridings in northern Ontario also apply for the districts of Huron and Bruce and Grey. It seems like the members of the government are willing to listen but not add their voice or even improve what is before us, so I will let my

colleague talk to the amendment. Also, the member for Windsor-Sandwich, who just left, would like to address this amendment.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I'm not going to comment on every one of them. I just want to generalize a little bit and I want to bring the attention of the members of the government side to the title of the bill itself, which deals with two particular questions. One deals with the boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts, the federal government, and subsequent to that to make some amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation. This one and most of the others deal exactly with that, changes to the electoral representation, and the motion Mr Grandmaître has just read deals exactly with that.

If we don't support something like that and also, as we have seen with the other amendments which have been proposed — the government side has not proposed any amendments to the bill as it has been proposed by the government. Are we to assume that the title of the bill before us, before this committee and the House, is misleading, is confusing, that it is improper? I would like to hear, for our benefit, what changes the government is contemplating other than just saying, "We are going to make our districts the same as their federal counterparts." What are they proposing to change to make amendments to the electoral representation?

That is missing from the bill, and it's something we heard during the hearings but we haven't heard coming from the government side. I'm not saying that to blame the government side, because perhaps they have not been given that information themselves, Mr Chair. Perhaps you yourself have not been given that information, as we have not and the public has not. What are those changes the government is thinking of? If the government is not thinking of making any changes whatsoever other than making the boundaries identical, then I would say the bill is totally, improperly, inaccurately misleading in its intent. That's what it is.

We could have said, "We are going to make the changes to our boundaries the same as the federal counterparts," period. That's it. But the bill, as it is titled, goes further: "to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation." How are we going to make those electoral changes to the representation?

I would hope we can find some understanding and sympathy from the government side. I'm addressing this particular part, and I have no idea where this is going to take us. Perhaps the members are willing to say: "Gee, we never thought about that. What are we proposing here? What kind of changes are we proposing to the electoral representation, as the title of the bill indicates?"

If there are no changes, nothing coming from the government side, we will have to conclude that it was just a façade, if you will, to introduce this bill, eliminate some of the representation, make it the same as the federal boundaries and just get on with it. Without expanding too long, I would seek a response from the government side. If I have missed something, either through the bill or the presentations, I would invite, I would kindly request some of the government side to tell

us, to tell the committee, where those electoral representation changes will or might be made.

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Mr Len Wood: Once again we're talking about trying to get the attention of the government in maintaining some of the ridings the way they are right now as per counties. As was said earlier in a presentation, the counties Huron, Grey and Bruce that were there seemed to be in an ideal situation. When you start changing the boundaries to exactly what the federal government has done — and I might point out that I'm not an expert on the hearings that took place in southern Ontario during the electoral commission process, but I know that the representation and the presentations that were made in northern Ontario they didn't pay any attention to.

If you talk to some of the advisers and people who were involved in the process, they were saying: "We have a problem in British Columbia because the population has grown and we have a problem in southern Ontario because the population has grown. In northern Ontario we'll jig around a little bit here and there, but northern Ontario is going to go from 11 to 10 members because we need one more member in southern Ontario in addition to the three they needed because of the population growth."

As I said before, the system was flawed. It would be ideal for this legislation to be pulled out of the House and have us go back and draw up something that fits Ontario, rather than using a pair of Ottawa shoes that don't fit and trying to get those shoes to fit Ontario. It doesn't work. It doesn't make any sense.

Even the short title they're putting on the bill, the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996, is a joke to all the people in northern Ontario, and I'm sure it's a joke in some of these other ridings. You put a name out there and say, "We're going to save a few million dollars." That's all it's about, just to save a few million dollars so it can all be put into the kitty either to add extra staff to Mike Harris and his group at Queen's Park or to give a tax break to the wealthy people. It doesn't make any sense.

It is an insult, and we've heard that time and time again. Even mayors and reeves — it doesn't matter if it was northwestern Ontario or northeastern Ontario — were saying: "Where are those few dollars going to go? Are they going back into the communities?" We had reductions last year in transfers to municipalities, to school boards, to hospitals. Now we're going to see less representation at the provincial level, at Queen's Park. When you reduce from 127 to 103, where's that money going to go? We see now that it's strictly going to go to the wealthy people.

And even though going to fewer politicians might not be taking money out of the constituents' pockets, it's taking their representation away. They're getting farther and farther away from their politician. The same thing is happening in some of these areas in rural Ontario.

As we were going through the hearings in Dryden and Timmins — people are still phoning me and saying: "I thought I was making a fair representation and a fair presentation, and all of a sudden, I was being attacked by Conservative members on the committee. Why are they attacking me? Why were they not listening and taking

notes and preparing for amendments to the legislation instead of mouthing off and attacking my presentation?"

The feeling is still there. Even the media is writing these stories in the newspapers saying there didn't seem to be anybody listening from the government benches on the committee.

I don't know what has to be done to make sure that Ontario is represented the way Ontarians feel, rather than an electoral boundaries commission that was set up for all of Canada. When you're redrawing the boundaries for all of Canada, it is different from doing it for just Ontario. It's different altogether. Nobody should be told, "We're taking into consideration Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, the Atlantic provinces, because they've got a small population and that's how the representation is going to be in Ottawa." We're not faced with those concerns when we're drawing up boundaries in Ontario.

I'm sure the people in rural southern Ontario are saying, "Why am I being bound by these federal boundaries?" that don't make any sense to a lot of them. There is no confusion. When people have a federal issue, they know who to call. When they have a provincial issue, they know exactly who to call. There is no confusion. There has never been any duplication or overlapping as far as representation is concerned. In my particular area, the federal member who's sitting there right now has been phoning my office looking for provincial issues to deal with because now he's got to run in a new federal riding which he isn't familiar with, and he's out there doing these things.

Mr Gravelle: They're not listening now.

Mr Len Wood: They're not listening, no. My colleague was not with us in Dryden or Timmins.

Mr Marchese: Sadly.

Mr Len Wood: It was sad to see some of these presenters who came forward and felt like they were being slapped across the face. In Timmins, we had people who came to the hearings and their knuckles were still white because Palladini had cut all the snowplowing and sanding, and it took them hours to get there, where it normally would only take them half an hour. They were just petrified, and some of the people did not make it because the roads were slippery, they were icy and —

Mr Gravelle: In Dryden, Iain Angus went off the road, went into the ditch.

Mr Len Wood: I didn't go into the ditch getting into Timmins, but I had to drive for two hours. Other people had to drive for up to three hours or three hours and a half. We had one person who made a presentation in Timmins: He drove from Thunder Bay to Hearst, he dropped his wife off, because she's getting chemo for cancer, and he got home at three o'clock in the morning, then at five o'clock in the morning he got up and drove to Timmins to make a presentation to the committee. During his presentation and the questions afterwards, he found it unbelievable that nobody seemed to be listening to him other than the NDP and the Liberal Party.

He said: "Why are we doing these things, putting my life at risk? I've already driven for eight hours in icy conditions from Thunder Bay, but I felt it was important, having represented that riding for seven years, to explain to the committee and maybe convince them that it's

wrong, dead wrong, to increase the size of these ridings in northern Ontario so that the people are going to be farther and farther away from their representatives."

And who will be the watchdogs over the mining resources and the trees that are used for the sawmills, pulp mills, paper mills? Who are going to be the watchdogs over these resources if you're going to make politicians so busy and spread their time so thin that they can't see what's going on out there and not have the time?

We know that Mike Harris is not going to do it from Toronto, because he didn't feel northern Ontario was important. He moved out of northern Ontario and moved to Toronto. Northern Ontario has been neglected as far as Mike Harris is concerned.

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Chris Hodgson has done nothing for northern Ontario. We call him the deadbeat northern development and mines minister because he's done nothing for northern Ontario other than fly into Thunder Bay, fly into North Bay, do a press conference and fly back out. That's all that he's done in 18 months, and it's shameful that —

Mr Young: Do you remember what bill we're talking about?

Mr Len Wood: We're talking about Bill 81, fewer politicians. All of these things come into play, because if we don't have a government that cares about northern Ontario and it keeps slapping the faces of the constituents and reducing the number of politicians, reducing the transfer payments to health care, education and everything else, all for the sake of bringing in a tax break to the wealthiest people, as I said earlier, it's Robin Hood in reverse, and this bill is all part of it.

That money's not going to go back into northern Ontario, the money that they're going to take. It's not going to go back into these southern communities. The farmers and the small store owners are going to get very little benefit from a tax break, yet they're going to have their whole representation changed because of Mike Harris making a silly campaign promise, not ever expecting to get elected but making a promise that seemed to be popular out there: "If we reduce the politicians, if we have fewer politicians, if we give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in the province, this will get me elected."

Now that he's elected, we find out that even the finance minister is staying awake every night, scratching his head, figuring out how he's going to deliver on all these promises that were made. He's even going to have to postpone the announcement of the reduction in transfers to hospitals, schools and all that. He's probably going to postpone that until January or February, because some of the caucus members, I understand, are starting to get very vocal now and they're starting to attack Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and the cabinet ministers. I'm glad to hear that those things are happening but it's going to have to happen more. It's not happening on this particular bill but I'm sure it's going to be happening.

I know for a fact, having lived in southern Ontario for a number of years, that in some of the areas their representative is being followed around and shouted at on a regular basis. I saw a situation in the town of St Marys,

in Perth county, where the Deputy Speaker was accused of not representing the area properly by refusing to speak up to stop a hospital from closing down. So people are being vocal and they're speaking up. They're telling them very clearly: "Don't you come back to us and ask us to re-elect you, because you're finished. We asked you for representation, to speak out on our behalf, and you refused to do it. That's it. You're gone." I know from my relatives and friends in these particular areas that people are starting to speak up.

In this particular piece of legislation, it seems we're not able to get the Conservative members. I'll be asking for your assistance, Mr Chair, maybe during lunch, to try to talk some sense into these people so that we can get some good amendments through, so that democracy is not destroyed in Ontario, and throughout northern Ontario, southern Ontario and rural Ontario it's protected. Thank you, Mr Chair, for being so patient.

The Chair: Any further discussion on the proposed new schedule?

Mr Stewart: Mr Chairman, on a point of privilege —

Mr Gravelle: Oh my God, they're awake.

Mr Stewart: I'll tell you, on a point of something, because I'm getting real fed up with getting insulted here on what happened up north. I would like for you, sir, to show me your notes that you took up there. You did absolutely nothing. You didn't have a bloody piece of paper in front of you. For us to say that we attacked people, I don't care what the rest of the committee did, but for me to attack people — I did not, and I take exception to that remark being made from you, sir.

Mr Len Wood: On the same point of privilege —

The Chair: It's really not a point of privilege, but he did have the right to make a comment.

Mr Len Wood: As I said during the hearings, when we have written presentations that are being made, I took my own notes. There was a lot of concern. People felt they were being attacked.

Mr Stewart: Where are they? Why aren't they at this meeting?

Mr Len Wood: I have all the written presentations. I have my notes.

Mr Stewart: Let's see them.

Mr Len Wood: This is the exact attitude we had in Dryden and in Timmins and in some of the other areas: attack after attack from the Conservative backbenchers against the presenters.

Mr Stewart: No, it isn't, and you know it.

Mr Len Wood: They were not listening and they don't care, and now we hear it again here today.

Mr Stewart: Totally ridiculous.

The Chair: Any further discussion on the proposed new schedule? All those in favour? All those opposed? This proposed new schedule is defeated.

Is there any discussion or any amendments to section 1 of the schedule? Any discussion on section 1 of the schedule? All those in favour of section 1 of the schedule? Opposed? Section 1 of the schedule is carried.

Section 2 of the schedule. Are there any amendments?

Mr Grandmaître: It being very close to 12 of the clock, Mr Chair, do you think we should come back at 3:30?

The Chair: We may as well at least present the amendment, and then when the bell rings we can —

Mr Grandmaître: Very good. I move that section 2 of the Representation Act, 1996, as set out in the schedule to the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception, Oriole

"(3) Despite subsection (1), the name of the provincial electoral district corresponding to the federal district of Don Valley East shall be 'Oriole' rather than 'Don Valley East'."

I can read you nine pages of Hansard back in 1975 as to why the name Oriole was chosen and why it should remain Oriole. I understand that the present member, Mrs Caplan, has spoken to the Honourable David Johnson about this name change — I shouldn't say this name change, but going against the proposal. Apparently there was this understanding and it was agreed that it should remain Oriole. I don't know what you people have heard from Mr Johnson or your House leader, but I'm anxious to listen to your comments, if you have any.

The Chair: Any further comment on the proposed change?

Mr Sergio: We'd like to have your support on this amendment.

The Chair: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is defeated.

Any further amendments to section 2 of the schedule? Shall section 2 of the schedule carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 2 of the schedule is carried.

Section 3 of the schedule. Are there any amendments?

Mr Grandmaître: I move that section 3 of the Representation Act, 1996, as set out in the schedule of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Hearings, resolution of Assembly

"(2) Subsection (1) applies only if,

"(a) after proclamation of the draft representation order under the federal act, public hearings into the impact of the adoption of the new electoral districts under subsection (1) are held in northern Ontario, eastern Ontario, southwestern Ontario and the Toronto area; and

"(b) after the public hearings are completed, the Assembly passes a resolution confirming that subsection (1) should apply."

Again, we would like to have the input of the public on the decision of this committee and also of the government. I think I don't have to repeat what was said most of the morning. I agree with some boundary changes but not necessarily the federal boundaries. I think we are strong enough. This is a great province and we should have our own boundaries, not duplicate the federal boundaries. I hope the government members will support this amendment.

The Chair: Any further discussion on this proposed amendment? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Any further amendments to section 3 of the schedule? All those in favour of section 3 of the schedule? Opposed? Section 3 of the schedule is carried.

Section 4 of the schedule. Are there any amendments? All those in favour of section 4 of the schedule? All those opposed? Section 4 of the schedule is carried.

Section 5 of the schedule. Are there any amendments? Shall section 5 of the schedule carry? Opposed? Section 5 of the schedule is carried.

Shall the schedule carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The schedule is carried.

Mr Marchese: On a different day, I would have spoken to that.

The Chair: We now have to go back to a section we stood down. Section 3 was stood down at the request of Mr Grandmaître.

The bells are about to ring. We will recess until 3:30 this afternoon.

The committee recessed from 1201 until 1611.

The Chair: We're back in business. When we last left our friends discussing clause by clause of Bill 81 we were returning to section 3, which we've stood down at the request of Mr Grandmaître. I understand he has an amendment.

Mr Grandmaître: Didn't I read the amendment into the record?

The Chair: I do not believe so, no.

Mr Grandmaître: Then I'll read it again.

I move that the following changes be made to section 44.1 and 44.2 of the Election Finances Act, as set out in section 3 of the bill:

"1. The definition of 'anniversary date' in subsection 44.1(2) is struck out and the following substituted:

""Impact date' means the day that is one year and 180 days after the proclamation date;

"2. Subsections 44.1(5), (6) and (10) and subsection 44.2(1) are amended by striking out 'anniversary date' and substituting in each case 'impact date.'"

The reason for this amendment: As you know, it changes the timing of the dissolution of the old riding associations. Instead of being dissolved automatically one year after the new federal boundaries come into force, January 8, 1997, the old riding associations would be automatically dissolved after one year.

This will give all parties just a little extra time — I should have said a year and a half, 18 months — to create new riding associations and change the party constitution. I think it's very important. It still means that the new ridings can be created earlier and the old ridings voluntarily dissolved before the year and a half deadline. It's a very simple request, a very simple amendment. We simply want to give the old and the new riding associations more time to be more effective.

The Chair: Any further comment on the amendment? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Any further amendments to section 3? Shall section 3 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 3 is carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? All those in favour? Opposed? The title of the bill is carried.

Shall the bill carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Shall I report the bill to the House? All those in favour? Opposed? Okay.

Mr Sergio, I understand, has a motion he would like us to deal with.

Mr Sergio: I move: The standing committee on general government requests that the government House leader refer all subsidiary issues related to the implemen-

tation of Bill 81 involving changes to the standing orders, the Legislative Assembly Act, the Election Finances Act and the Election Act to a special committee of the Legislative Assembly with equal representation from all parties. These issues include, but are not limited to: new election finance limits; new members' office support and communications budget; additional office and support budget allocations for northern and large-riding MPPs; new caucus budget allocations; definition of official party status; size and makeup of standing committees.

The standing committee on general government requests that recommendations on all of these issues be put before the House and implemented within 12 months of the commencement of Bill 81. Changes would take effect on the day of the election of a new Parliament.

I think the motion speaks for itself and I don't want to dwell too long, in the hope of not losing some of the support I have on the other side.

Mr Gravelle: It appears unanimous.

Mr Sergio: It may be unanimous at this stage, so I wouldn't want to —

Interjections.

Mr Sergio: I thought I'd try, you know. I think, Mr Chair, this is, what would I call it, a very innocuous motion that would benefit every member that is in that particular situation. It is to benefit especially, as the motion says, some of those ridings, as the members have heard and have agreed, that will not be so easily manageable, especially the ones up north. It's not our members or the NDP side; it could be your members as well who may be in those predicaments and I think we should make provision to see that those members will indeed be given the opportunity to serve the public as well as those in the southern end of our province. In a nutshell, that is the reason for the motion, and I would hope that we find some common ground, common sense and common understanding.

Mr Len Wood: Having travelled through the north, I fully expect that we're going to get support for this particular motion that's come forward because this was some of the comment that was made from a lot of the members there, that extra resources were needed maybe for some of the big ridings that need representation where the member would have a hard time getting around. One of the ways of doing it would be to have an all-party committee with equal representation sit down and work out a plan before the election so the Conservative caucus does not end up in the same jackpot that Kim Campbell ended up with in the last election, where you only have one member re-elected and one new member and they lose party status.

The Chair: Kim who?

Mr Len Wood: We can see this happening with the financial statement and the questions that are coming up there right now. It's like my grandson; I give him a tool to take his bicycle apart and then he says: "Granddad, I tore it all apart but now I don't know how to put it back together."

This is Mike and his group. They've torn everything apart in Ontario and now they don't know how to put it back together. They're going to postpone the financial impact and the amount of money they're going to transfer

to the different ridings. I listened attentively. I didn't take as many notes as Mr Stewart has said he took. He wrote a whole book of notes, and yet the only comment he's been able to make today so far is to attack me for not taking as many notes as he has.

Mr Marchese: He wrote a book but he didn't listen.

Mr Len Wood: Yes, exactly. That's all that happened up there. If you wanted me to send out a copy of your book to all the presenters who were there, I'll also explain to them how quiet you've been in the clause-by-clause hearings. He wasn't able to speak up on their behalf because Mike Harris has the throttle on him. I can see all the necks stretching there; if they do speak up, there's going to be a problem. I think with that I've made enough comments on the record now, Mr Chair. Thank you for your patience.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I appreciate having the opportunity to speak to something that we didn't already talk to during the hearings, and Mr Sergio makes a good point.

I must admit that I have two concerns with the motion as it's drafted, Mr Sergio, and the first is, a number of the things you talk about, if I look at your last line, "Changes would take effect on the day of the election of a new Parliament" — clearly anything to do with the Election Act I would have thought you would want to take place before the election. I think that's a substantive problem with the motion.

1620

Let me just comment, if I may, and if I make any errors as a new member in what I recount as my understanding, I hope someone with greater experience corrects me. First off, the Board of Internal Economy, on an annual basis, reviews the members' budgets and all aspects of the budget. I would expect as a matter of course that all three parties would have their House leaders and their representatives on the Board of Internal Economy make such representations as are necessary to address the issues that we heard in the north about greater travel. I think that would be a very reasonable thing, but I would suggest the forum is already in place and it's the Board of Internal Economy.

Secondly, the aspects of the election finances are also done with equal representation, it's my understanding. I think there are two representatives from each party on the Commission on Election Finances. I know that our party will be making representations to them and I would think that your party as well would be well advised to do that.

I guess the third thing that comes to mind is that the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly is already charged with overseeing all of the topics that aren't covered by those first two headings I mentioned. What I would be prepared to say is, speaking personally, and I think I can say on behalf of my colleagues, that we would welcome the opportunity to review all of those things.

I think there was one thing in your original draft that isn't before us here today — forgive me, it is there; I had missed it. I believe the standing orders themselves say that only the Legislative Assembly committee can review them.

For those substantive reasons, while I can't support this motion, I would be prepared to put on the record that we will be prepared to enter into a dialogue on every topic you've put on there, and in those three respective forums I think you will find that we will reflect what we heard in the north. I genuinely believe that we have those mechanisms, and if all three parties go in there in good faith, I think we'll be able to accomplish all that needs to be done to make sure that there's still a balance in how those dollars are allocated.

Mr Grandmaitre: At least I'm pleased that the government is willing and ready to take a second look at what is being proposed, but I'd like to remind Mr Gilchrist that this bill was, let's say, dreamed up by three independent people, Mitch Patten representing your party, Barbara Sullivan representing our party and Tony Silipo representing the NDP.

What we are suggesting today is, why can't we go back to the very same people who came up with this bill and give them 12 months and say, "Come back and see us 12 months from now and tell us what you think are the possibilities financially and so on and so forth." Let the same people work, the same people who had the experience of drafting this bill — well, not drafting this bill but dreaming it.

I don't know if the government members would agree to this, but I can tell you that the three House leaders have talked about that possibility. I think it's up to the members of the government to pursue this with Mr Johnson and get this independent committee to work on this motion.

Mr Len Wood: I appreciate your comments, Mr Gilchrist, on that and I take you at your word, that there's going to be some effort put into it. I'm not going to be very long, but I would point out that I've talked to a lot of MPs at the federal level since the last election and they were under the impression that even though the Conservative caucus did not get the 12 members they needed in writing to be able to speak and have question period and this and that, nor did the NDP get that status, it was done at the discretion of the Speaker before.

When the Social Credit Party was there, they had five members and they went through the rotation of the statements and questions and this and that, but it depends; if you leave it at the discretion of the Speaker, no matter which political party is there, it might not happen. I think it would be a sad situation if we end up with the same thing that is happening in Ottawa, where traditional parties that have been around for 40 or 50 years, because of GST or free trade or a desire on the part of the populace to make sure that all recognition is wiped out, you end up with 98 out of 99 seats in Ontario going to one political party and there's no voice for anybody else there. I think it would be sad if we allowed that to happen in Ontario, knowing in advance that it could happen very easily. One party could be wiped out, with only Mike and Ernie coming back. It looks like this is going to happen right now. I'm speaking on your behalf. You people should have a voice in the next Parliament.

The Chair: I'm sure the government members appreciate your concern.

Mr Marchese: Just three points: I support the motion. I think it's a useful motion. Mr Gilchrist raises some good points about the fact that the Board of Internal Economy covers most of these — not all of them; I think you pointed that out as well. Part of why it's useful to have a special committee is to deal with some of the issues that fall from Bill 81. My sense is that some of you would agree there are some areas of concern around this, even though you're committed to the bill. Some of these members could use some extra assistance, no doubt. The definition of the official party status has to be looked at. I think you agree with that.

Maybe you've been given direction to oppose it. I'm not sure.

Mr Gilchrist: No.

Mr Marchese: If you haven't been given direction, then you could probably support a motion that says rather than listing all of these, the motion could look at some matters that flow from Bill 81 and that a special committee should do that. The reason I support that is because when you get into a Board of Internal Economy kind of politics, it can be very partisan, by and large. The point of having a special committee is not to be partisan but rather to find some ways in which we can deal with the consequences that flow from Bill 81 that I think can be dealt with less politically, be less partisan.

While the Board of Internal Economy would handle most of these, it can't handle all of them. I'm not sure it hurts you, necessarily, to agree to establish or support that a special committee look at items such as size and makeup of standing committees, definition of official party status, new caucus budget allocation based on Bill 81. It doesn't bind you, but I think it's a very useful and practical thing for us all to be looking at because we're all affected by this. I wonder whether you might consider that.

Mr Gilchrist: I don't profess, after 17 months, to be at all expert in this but I wonder whether it might be equally effective if we could all go away and at some point in the future, on the assumption that the bill passes through third reading, come back and have a discussion around this table about the strategies you would see in play.

My problem is very specific. The way this resolution is worded precludes any of the things you'd want to do because it won't take effect till the day of the next election.

Interjection.

Mr Gilchrist: No, but we're being asked about the resolution before us here today. I would rather give you an undertaking that we are certainly prepared to discuss all these aspects. You have agreed that there are some where the proper forum is the Board of Internal Economy. If some aren't in there, if it's at all appropriate — I know at resources we've had discussions that aren't necessarily related to a specific bill — I would be quite prepared to suggest that might be something we would all want to do, bring back a strategy. If you've got some suggestions on the kind of spending differential, if you've got some suggestions on what the magic number —

Mr Marchese: I think we should talk.

Mr Gilchrist: My point is that your view obviously would be different from the Liberals' and from ours, at least at the starting point. I think we should each have an opportunity to lay out our case. If and when it becomes political, I would agree with you at that point there may be a mechanism we need to break the logjam.

1630

But I would prefer, given that we have a structure in place right now, to leave this room with an understanding that we will deal in good faith on all these issues. If the board is not the proper forum, then I personally am prepared to come back here and at least put all our positions on the table and let that take it where it may. We certainly have a lot of time. It's not like we're under the gun in the next —

Mr Len Wood: You're not expecting a snap election?

Mr Gilchrist: I think you can safely assume, after the success Mr Peterson had, that will not be one of the historical precedents we follow.

Mr Grandmaitre: Don't try it.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm sure my colleagues opposite would echo that.

The Chair: Mr Sergio, do you have any further comment?

Mr Sergio: I'm encouraged by the comments, seriously, Mr Chair, and the way the motion has been drafted, it is not to be political; it is plain and simple the way it is. If we wanted to make it political we could have said, "Let's do it immediately," or whatever. The reason for the 180 days is to give this committee plenty of time after the next election. That is the purpose. It is so innocuous that it really doesn't bother anyone. We can only get some benefits after we see, if this is going to pass, the implementation. When we start to have some feedback, then this committee can work out the glitches or whatever they want to attack.

I'm quite receptive at this stage to say it has some merits for all concerned and that we should look at it in due course with much more time instead of at this particular time. I certainly don't want to come back and spend next week dealing with this thing here. But since we seem to have some common ground and there are some benefits in discussing all or most of the items mentioned in the motion here, perhaps we could defer it to a later time — I don't know if it's appropriate; I have no idea how the committee works, if there is a subcommittee — and include in the discussion what's proposed in this motion. This way if you want to discuss some, some not, approve it, not approve it, changes, whatever, I would be amenable to deferring it to a later date, to a later time, and have the committee attack this with whatever else may be on the table.

The Chair: Based on what I have heard, there certainly seems to be consensus that these issues need to be dealt with by somebody. The question is, who is the proper body to deal with them and at what time frame? Is everybody in agreement with the fact that we just defer any action on this until some time in the future, as suggested by the mover?

Mr Grandmaitre: Mr Chair, you say "some time in the future." I realize that we have three or three and a

half years before the next election but I would like to get some kind of commitment that within the next six months we will meet again or that at least the government House leader will consider it. But to say forever, well then —

Interjections.

Mr Sergio: About six months.

Mr Grandmaitre: I don't know if six months is reasonable.

The Chair: Is it a six-month time frame? Within six months? Is that acceptable?

Mr Len Wood: Just to add to that, I think it's very important that all three parties make representation to their House leaders so that the House leaders try to get this in as quickly as possible and we can deal with it so that it doesn't go beyond the six months or drag on and then we're faced with election and we don't have anything resolved.

Mr Marchese: If we put it on the agenda for discussion, it will assure us that it will come. It's a matter of the Chair at some point bringing it to our attention so the matter gets discussed.

Mr Len Wood: The subcommittee or whatever.

The Chair: We've agreed that this issue will be revisited within six months and we're asking each caucus to have some discussions with their House leader about the issue. Is that the essence of what we said? Is everybody in agreement with that?

Mr Gilchrist: I'm told by the clerk it would be in order at this time, seeing that we still have an hour and a half, to move that we return to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 53, at section 12, where we left off.

Interjections.

Mr Gilchrist: If I could speak very briefly to the motion, I was told the only reason it was suspended is because government bills take precedence, that otherwise it would have been heard as the first thing of our meeting on November 7.

The Chair: Okay, Mr Gilchrist —

Mr Marchese: If he had discussed that possibility, we would have been prepared for it, but we're not.

Interjection: We're almost finished anyway.

Mr Gilchrist: It's just the title of the act.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist has moved that we return to Bill 53. It is not on the agenda, but if it is the wish of the committee, then we would need to take a short recess for the clerk to get his papers together on it.

Mr Marchese: Mr Chair, what do we have left on that bill?

Mr Gilchrist: Just the short title.

Mr Marchese: Oh, yes, all right. Is that the loonie bill again? What number is that?

The Chair: Since we just have the question of the title of the bill to deal with, do we need a recess?

Mr Marchese: No recess. Let's deal with it now.

Mr Stewart: Just before we leave the bill we've been dealing with, I would like to offer a personal thanks to my colleagues across the way, the NDP members of this committee, for their support of this bill, Bill 81, because they did not table an amendment.

LABOUR UNION
AND EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 1996
LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ
FINANCIÈRE DES SYNDICATS
ET DES ASSOCIATIONS D'EMPLOYÉS

Consideration of Bill 53, An Act to Promote Full Financial Accountability of Labour Unions and Employees Associations to Their Members / Projet de loi 53, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilité financière complète des syndicats et des associations d'employés envers leurs membres.

The Chair: Returning to clause-by-clause of Bill 53, the final questions: Shall section 12 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 12 is carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the bill, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? All those in favour? Opposed? Agreed.

We stand adjourned until the call of the Chair.

The committee adjourned at 1638.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Chair / Président: Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

*Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent PC)
Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough PC)
Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre / -Centre PC)
*Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East / -Est L)
*Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)
*Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York ND)
Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)
*Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich L)
*Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West / -Ouest PC)
*Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview L)
*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
*Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
*Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North / -Nord PC) for Mr Danford
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Hardeman
Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford PC) for Mr Young
Mr Gary Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot PC) for Mr Maves
Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr John Parker (York East / -Est PC) for Mr Maves
Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea PC) for Mr Danford

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur L)

Clerk Pro Tem /

Greffier par intérim: Mr Todd Decker

Staff / Personnel: Mr Ted Glenn, research officer, Legislative Research Service
Ms Cornelia Schuh, legislative counsel

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of Ontario**
First Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**
Première session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 23 January 1997

Jeudi 23 janvier 1997

**Standing committee on
general government**

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Organization

Organisation



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Clerk: Lynn Mellor

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Thursday 23 January 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Jeudi 23 janvier 1997

The committee met at 1005 in committee room 1.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms Donna Bryce): Honourable members, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a Chair. We have a resignation of the position of Vice-Chair as well, so we'll be doing both of those this morning. Are there any nominations for the position of Chair?

Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre): I nominate Bart Maves, MPP, as Chair.

Clerk Pro Tem: Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, I declare nominations closed and Mr Maves elected Chair.

Mr Maves, if you can come up to the Chair's seat.

The Chair (Mr Bart Maves): Thank you very much, colleagues. I appreciate the support for my position as Chair, and I'm happy to accept that.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair: It is my duty now to call upon the committee to elect a Vice-Chair. Are there any nominations?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I would like to nominate Julia Munro, the member for Durham-York.

The Chair: Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and Mrs Munro elected Vice-Chair.

APPOINTMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE

The Chair: Is there a mover for a motion to appoint a subcommittee on committee business?

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I move that a subcommittee on committee business be appointed to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair, or at the request of any member thereof, to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee; that the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting and that the subcommittee be composed of the following members: Mr Maves, Mrs Munro, M. Grandmaître and M. Marchese; and that any member may designate a substitute member on the subcommittee who is of the same recognized party.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

All those in favour of the motion?

Seeing that it's unanimous, I won't ask the question if there's anyone opposed. I declare the motion carried.

Mr Grandmaître: What a great committee this is going to be.

The Chair: Very efficient so far, committee.

Just to note for the committee, there are two bills that have been referred to this committee: one is Bill 80, the Juvenile Delinquents Act, which was brought forward by Mr Brown; and actually my own bill, Bill 89, the Accountability Improvement Act.

At some point in time, just to let committee members know, the subcommittee will have to get together to discuss what we're to do with those two bills.

Other than that, I don't believe there is any further business we need to take care of today, so I will declare the committee adjourned until further notice.

The committee adjourned at 1009.

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Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough PC)

*Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre / -Centre PC)

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Clerk pro tem /

Greffière par intérim: Ms Donna Bryce

Staff / Personnel: Mr Jerry Richmond, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 3 février 1997

**Standing committee on
general government**

City of Toronto Act, 1996

Committee business

**Comité permanent des
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Loi de 1996 sur la cité de Toronto

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Monday 3 February 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Lundi 3 février 1997

The committee met at 0913 in room 151.

CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Consideration of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr Bart Maves): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the standing committee on general government's hearings on the City of Toronto Act, 1996.

I have several announcements to start off this morning. The first one is that, pursuant to the order of the House, this committee will start its afternoon sittings at 3:30 promptly whether or not the House has completed routine proceedings. All members should note that: whether or not the House has completed routine proceedings.

If there are any votes in the House during the committee hearings, I will suspend the proceedings of the committee for about five minutes — that's at my discretion — to allow members to get to the chamber and vote. I will resume the hearings immediately after the vote, so please don't mill about after the vote, come right back to the committee room.

Of note, perhaps not only for members but for anyone else joining us today, the cafeteria will remain open until 7 pm on the nights that we are sitting to allow members and the public to get some food during our 6 pm to 7 pm break.

Members have in front of you some written exhibits submitted so far and you will get more written submissions as time goes by.

For anyone not able to find a seat in the room if we have more folks join us, there is an overflow room. Today it will be committee rooms 1 and 2.

Our first order of business is discussion and then adoption of the report of the subcommittee. I'm going to read the report of the subcommittee into the record for members.

The subcommittee met on Thursday, January 30, 1997, and agreed to the following:

"1. That the minister be offered 30 minutes in which to make a presentation. Each of the two opposition parties will then have 30 minutes to question the minister and to place comments on the record.

"2. That each of the existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto be offered 30 minutes in which to make presentations and that they be invited to appear, if possible, on Monday, February 3, 1997.

"3. That the board of trustees be requested to appear for 30 minutes in which to make a presentation.

"4. That every individual be offered up to 10 minutes in which to make their presentation. The subcommittee will revisit the time frame for groups.

"5. That any time remaining in an individual's or an organization's presentation will be used for questions from the committee. A party rotation will be followed. If time permits, more than one party may have the opportunity to question a deputant. If the deputant's time expires before all parties have posed their questions, the Chair will recognize the next party in the rotation for question in the following presentation.

"6. That scheduling be done by the clerk under the direction of the committee. Each party will provide the clerk with their selection of deputants chosen from the lists provided by the clerk on an ongoing basis.

"7. That a partial list of deputants is required from each party at 12 pm on Friday, January 31, 1997.

"8. That the clerk has the authority to use these three lists to begin scheduling on Friday, January 31, 1997.

"9. That the committee run an advertisement for one day in the Toronto daily papers. Committee hearings will also be advertised on the Ontario parliamentary channel, on the Internet and through a press release.

"10. That the clerk has the authority to place the advertisement in the papers.

"11. That the deadline for written submissions is on Thursday, February 28, 1997, and that the deadline for requests to make an oral submission is on Thursday, February 13, 1997.

"12. That the committee will request the Clerk of the House to have the Ontario parliamentary channel televise the evening sittings of the committee and rebroadcast the daily happenings in the House after 9 pm.

"13. That ministry staff be present at all committee hearings.

"14. That legislative research prepare a summary of recommendation during the second and fourth weeks of hearings.

"15. That the Chair start each meeting punctually, regardless of the number of members in attendance.

"16. That the Chair, in consultation with the subcommittee, if necessary, shall make all additional decisions necessary with respect to the public hearings.

"17. That the clerk, in consultation with the Chair, shall implement a procedure for filling cancelled time slots.

"18. That beginning on Thursday, February 6, 1997, the committee will travel during the evening sittings to the city hall of each of the affected municipal governments and that each municipality will be visited by the committee at least once.

"19. That the committee will offer 15 minutes to Citizens for Local Democracy as the first deputant on Monday, February 3, 1997, to discuss the procedure of the committee hearings."

Is there a mover for the subcommittee report? Mr Silipo moves. Is there any discussion?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I would move to delete clauses 18 and 19.

The Chair: Discussion?

Mr Gilchrist: First off, on 18 —

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Unbelievable.

Mr Gilchrist: On 18, I think it's clearly not practical to consider that at the evening break this committee can adjourn to any other locale. First off, we have the practical considerations of Hansard, both the written and the electronic Hansard, the translation service, the members' transportation and then we have the cost of the TV feed back to Queen's Park from any of those venues, where the feed out from Queen's Park is clearly provided at no charge by the parliamentary channel.

I think the other practical consideration is that it will be difficult, if indeed possible at all, for the committee to even arrive at places like Scarborough city hall in the one hour that we would have at our disposal and, quite frankly, to hear only 12 people in each venue each of those nights, the cost which we had an estimate on the broadcast expense alone could be as high as \$40,000. It is clearly inappropriate that we spend that kind of money when we would compromise the ability of people to receive the electronic broadcast, which is provided via the parliamentary channel not just across Metro but across all of Ontario.

Second, on clause 19, I think it's totally inappropriate to suggest that any one individual or any one group should have special dispensation. On the flipside, it is quite appropriate for them to take whatever portion of the time allotted to them to deal with procedural matters. However, having spent about 35 minutes discussing all the aspects of the subcommittee process with them last week, I'm confident that they are fully apprised of how this committee does its various scheduling, and if there are any further questions, I think it would be appropriate for them to pose them to the office of the Clerk. I don't think it's appropriate for us to create a precedent and allow them to actually come, even before the minister and the two opposition parties have put their comments on the record.

0920

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I think the exclusion or the attempt to delete number 18, which calls for this committee to travel to each of the city halls — that is an essential part of this committee's deliberations. As you know, it's the tradition of the Legislature to visit affected municipalities when legislation is before them. Committees of this Legislature go to Timmins, they go to Thunder Bay, they go to Ottawa, they go to Kenora. Now if you will use that argument in terms of the cost of this as

a way of essentially limiting debate — that's what it's all about. If that principle is established at this committee, it strikes at the fundamental basis of this Legislature.

In other words, if we put a pricetag on whether you can go and talk to people and people can be part of the process in these municipalities, you are in essence going to say that every time a piece of legislation comes before a committee, they are going to, first of all, look at the cost and say because of the cost of supposed television hookups, you can't go to that municipality.

If there isn't something as fundamental as that that is wrong about deleting this — and you know I think it's also part of the fact that if you are going to in essence close down the city halls and close down these local governments, if you don't have the guts to go to their municipalities and tell the taxpayers of Scarborough, Etobicoke, York, East York and North York to their faces why you're closing their doors down and why their government doesn't work, I say to you that's wrong. Based on situations where these city halls or governments have existed for 200 years, at least have the courtesy to go out there, get out of Queen's Park for one sitting, to listen and hear and people can participate in this process. I think that's an affront and this is why many parts of this bill are wrong. What you're doing here is typical of this affront to the basic participation people are asking for. In terms of cost, let's find out whether we can eliminate that \$40,000 cost.

The other thing I should mention in terms of nights, the subcommittee has agreed it doesn't have to be a night sitting. There's no reason why we can't spend one whole day in Scarborough, Etobicoke or East York. There are so many little excuses and roadblocks to going out to the municipalities — and you're the same government that is saying: "Oh, there's overwhelming support for amalgamation of the municipalities. We don't even need a referendum."

But I tell you, the reason you won't go out there is because you're afraid because you know the people in most of these municipalities don't want this shoved down their throats. That's why you won't go out there. You're afraid to go to the city halls, to East York, to Scarborough and Etobicoke when essentially we should go out there because of basic democratic courtesy. If you're going to make such dramatic changes in the lives of these people, out of tradition and courtesy and democracy you should go out there and let the people participate in person if they want to.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): It's quite telling, you know, and reflective of everything that this government has done in dealing with this issue, that the first item we're dealing with this morning is their refusal to travel to the different city halls to hear and give people an opportunity to be in their own communities as they speak to the committee and as they follow this process.

It's quite telling because we know that what this government has tried to do, what Mr Leach and what Mr Harris have tried to do is to just ram this piece of legislation through without any real process, and only when they saw that that was a bit problematic did they back off on that and did they come to the point of saying,

"Oh, let's have the hearings at least go on beyond the referendum."

When I put these two motions before the subcommittee, I did it because I thought it would reflect a sense still left by this Conservative caucus that they were going to at least go through the process of hearing people in a legitimate way and that being in the city council chambers is where people who are involved and who are interested in these civic issues that we are dealing with tend to be, Chair. It just makes so much sense for the committee to go.

There are lots of reasons. I could add probably another five reasons to Mr Gilchrist of potential issues as to why maybe it's difficult to do it, but those are all quite frankly reasons that any travelling committee always has to deal with, the question of Hansard travelling, but we do it all the time when we go outside of Toronto.

The question of the time frame: If there's a will to do it, I'm sure it can be done, I say to Mr Gilchrist. There's nothing magic about the 7-to-9 slot. If that became an issue, I'm sure that if there was agreement in this committee, there wouldn't be a problem with even your ministers in terms of the committee sitting from 7:30 to 9:30 if that facilitated us getting to Scarborough city hall if that was necessary.

On the question of money in terms of the issue of televising the proceedings, we know there is already available a cable feed from each of the city halls, and I think in a situation like this some discussion with the cable companies about eliminating those costs is something that could be done.

The point is, Chair, that if in fact the government members were interested in having the committee travel, it could be done. There's no doubt about it: It could be done and it should be done. But the sheer reality is that they would much prefer for us to be pigeonholed into this committee, which, although it's well equipped, is not going to be able to hold the hundreds of people who are interested in following this debate, not on TV, but live. That's what the issue is about. The issue is about allowing citizens to follow these discussions, to be participants in these discussions. That, by the way, is what happens when councils deal with issues that are important to people. But of course we're not surprised that that kind of notion is strange to our Conservative colleagues across, because it's reflective, as I say, of everything they have done on this bill so far.

As far as the issue of hearing Citizens for Local Democracy, let me say again to the Conservative members that if you haven't understood the kind of significance there is to this grass-roots citizens' movement that has sprung up as a result of your actions, then you really have your head in the sand, you really don't understand what civic participation is all about, you really don't understand what has gotten people so riled up. Your anti-democratic measures in ramming through this piece of legislation, coupled with your insistence on downloading on to the property tax base costs that should clearly be borne at the provincial level, your linking of all of these things — you've done it; we haven't had to do it.

People are understanding what you're doing and people are upset, and the Citizens for Local Democracy group

should be given an opportunity to talk to us about some real concerns that I know they have about the process. Because we know that, try as we might, one of the key issues we have in front of us with this committee is how to deal with the hundreds, over 1,200 people so far, a growing list of people who are wanting to speak to this committee.

As a subcommittee within the confines, we're trying to do our best in recommending what should be done with individuals. We've got the issue of organization still to be dealt with by the subcommittee. But the reality is that unless the Conservative members on this committee are going to be willing to show some flexibility as we go down the road, we aren't going to be able to hear anywhere near the number of people who are interested in talking to this committee about these important issues. That's something that we also have to address, Chair.

So for those reasons it's clearly important that the committee travel to the city halls and certainly that the Citizens for Local Democracy group be given a few minutes to talk to us about the process.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Silipo. To the group — I recognize some of the folks from Citizens for Local Democracy — just to let you know you may not indeed be the first group presenting. That's under debate right now as the committee considers the subcommittee report. In light of that, I'd invite you to remain seated until we have that decision.

Mr John Sewell: Mr Chair, we did want to speak to the procedural question before there's a vote.

The Chair: We have further debate, and that's from Mr Sergio.

0930

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, I have here the recommendations of the subcommittee and I believe that these recommendations were accepted by the subcommittee. Am I correct?

The Chair: By this committee?

Mr Sergio: The subcommittee accepted these recommendations here?

The Chair: That's right.

Mr Gilchrist: No, no. By a majority vote.

Mr Sergio: Hold it. Don't say no, because it says right on top that these are the recommendations as made and accepted by the subcommittee. Mr Gilchrist, please.

The Chair: Mr Sergio, the subcommittee consists of a member from each party and the subcommittee report was adopted, all except for basically the last two points.

Mr Sergio: No, no. Mr Chairman —

The Chair: Let me finish, Mr Sergio. Now the subcommittee report has to come before committee and be approved by committee, and that's what we're doing right now. We're having a discussion.

Mr Sergio: Are you saying what's in front of us, not everything was approved by the subcommittee?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): By a majority vote.

The Chair: Yes, not unanimously, but by a majority, two to one.

Mr Gerretsen: It's the only time.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chair, isn't it the case that all the recommendations, usually whatever has been recom-

mended by the subcommittee, is presented to this committee here?

Mr Gilchrist: Or approved.

The Chair: All of the subcommittee reports in any committee hearings need to be approved by the full committee. The subcommittee is simply a —

Mr Sergio: But all the 19 recommendations would have been approved, according to the recommendation here.

The Chair: That's true.

Mr Sergio: That's true, okay. So if those recommendations were approved, normally the committee, as we are now, rubber-stamps those recommendations.

The Chair: No, that's not the case.

Mr Sergio: That's not the case? It's always been the case in the past.

The Chair: No, there quite often would be some —

Mr Sergio: It's always been the case in the past, usually. What is the purpose then to have this debated, to have a subcommittee make recommendations so we don't waste time here, half a day, discussing these recommendations so we can go immediately to the public? Isn't that the idea, to have a subcommittee make those recommendations, and those recommendations to be rubber-stamped by this committee here?

The Chair: No, they're never rubber-stamped. They're always open to debate, and that's what we're doing right now.

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, that's fine. I can see where the member is coming from, and for that member, specifically that member, to appear this morning here on a question of cost, when we are soon travelling within Metro and the members of the government side, Mr Chairman, especially Mr Gilchrist, did not take into consideration the expenses we incurred travelling to Thunder Bay, Timmins, to fly members on a daily basis to hear as many as six people and today to tell the people of Metropolitan Toronto that it's the cost, \$40,000 — that's a pathetic excuse. There is absolutely no reason why we shouldn't be travelling within Metro. I hope that common sense will prevail today.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr Gilchrist, then Ms Churley and Ms Lankin.

Mr Gilchrist: I don't know whether Mr Sergio's putting on the record that he doesn't think it's appropriate we travel to Thunder Bay or whether he's saying that cost is not an issue.

Mr Sergio: That's not what I said.

Mr Gerretsen: That's nonsense.

Mr Gilchrist: But the bottom line is that the subcommittee gets together to hopefully accelerate the process through which the various scheduling issues can be decided. I think it's quite appropriate that on 17 of these points we reached more or less unanimous consent. There's still one issue to be discussed. It is a fact that I put forward a five-minute presentation time for individuals. I was outvoted on that, but I am prepared to go along with that. That would have accommodated 1,200 people, and quite frankly would be consistent with the same standard used at every city hall.

However, on the last two things, the last two clauses, this is a provincial bill and the precedent is that the

committees always sit here. The only example that was ever given to me of a deviation was a select committee that was charged with specific and very different rules. But the standing committees of the Legislature meet here.

Mr Silipo: We travel all the time.

Mr Sergio: That's nonsense.

Mr Gilchrist: Within Toronto, Mr Silipo could only give me a reference of one other committee that had ever travelled. The town hall meetings, we have lots of opportunities for people to come forward, and I think being lost in all of the rhetoric opposite is the fact that there will be only 12 people scheduled each night, because at 10-minute allocations that's all you can fit in. This doesn't limit debate. I have every confidence that every slot from now until the first week of March will be filled. So if every spot is filled, perhaps you can explain how we would be limiting debate.

There have been any number of people express interest in appearing before the committee. They knew at the outset, or the Clerk's office would not have told them otherwise, that this is where hearings take place. The fact that those names are on the record presumably means that they are interested in coming out and making their presentation here before us.

I think we can't ignore the cost and we certainly can't ignore the fact that there are a myriad of other reasons, not the least of which would be votes and other considerations, why the members would have to be here until 6 o'clock. Your own motion, the two-to-one vote that outvoted my concerns, was that we have only the night sittings in those towns. So if in fact Mr Silipo is saying that the motion is defective because it doesn't allow enough time to travel, well, forgive me, sir, but it's your motion. I do not believe it is practical and I don't believe it's cost-effective.

The bottom line is that the people across this province and across Metro deserve access via the television channel and the parliamentary broadcast system, as well as the ability to come down here and have free parking after 4:30 and any number of other advantages we offer: We're on the subway, we're on bus routes, we are more convenient than many of the city halls. The bottom line is that it is far more appropriate to have the committee meeting in this venue.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I heard Mr Gilchrist on CBC Radio this morning talking about the fact, and he just mentioned himself, that he's willing to live with the majority vote on the subcommittee on the 10 minutes as opposed to five. I find it interesting that he's picking and choosing what he can live with, based on what the subcommittee decided on, and what he can't. It's very clear to me that this is not about necessarily limiting debate. The very nature by which this government — the quick timing on this so that people can't really participate means, de facto, that debate is being limited on this.

What it's all about is not having meetings in city halls which will be packed with people — we know that; they know that — who are opposed to what they are doing. They don't want to see, or they want to limit that, to the extent they can, from being shown on TV: big demonstrations, hundreds and hundreds of people there making the

hearings, frankly, difficult for them, because there are very many people outraged about what's going on here. We know that's what's really going on here.

I would say it's profoundly stupid of the government members to have these committee hearings starting off like this today, with Citizens for Local Democracy sitting here waiting to talk to us. What are we doing here but sitting and fighting about something that's quite fundamental? The people of all of the cities around the Metro area want us to come to their cities. Why not do that? Why not do it even if you are afraid of the crowds that are going to come out? It would help us get on with this. In terms of listening to these people here today, for heaven's sake, there they are sitting here, ready to talk to us. What are you going to do, have them thrown out?

Let's just agree, for heaven's sake: common sense. You guys take the cake. You don't know what common sense is. This is ridiculous, having this committee start off by not allowing these people to give a presentation and by not allowing us to travel at city halls with all these lame excuses.

I would suggest to the committee now, let's get on with this. Let's do what the people of all of the cities in the Metro area want: Get out there, give people the opportunity to come down and listen in the public forum to what's going on. Let's move on this. Use some real common sense and stop trying to overturn the decisions on the subcommittee when it's convenient for you to do so.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I want to address both points that Mr Gilchrist has raised. I continue to be amazed by this government's attitude, the arrogance with which they approach this process around hearing from citizens in Metro Toronto on such an important and fundamental change to the governance of those very citizens.

First of all, let me deal with the issue of the committee travelling. I have never heard such bunk as the series of excuses that I have heard put up by this government, and it's not just what I've heard from Mr Gilchrist today. This started in the House leaders' meetings, which you know I attend. In those meetings, some of the first things we heard were similar to Mr Gilchrist's: "It has to be broadcast. You have to have the Amethyst Room, because that's the only place where this can have a province-wide broadcast." I tell you, there are bills that go through this place all the time where there are committees sitting simultaneously in this room and in other rooms which don't have the broadcast facilities and the government never blinks an eye, and never at that point in time says that we have to set up broadcast facilities because every bill has to be broadcast.

I think it is worthy of being broadcast. I think we should use this room, we should ensure that it's broadcast, but the government put that up as the straw person why the committee couldn't travel. "It would be impossible to have the hearings broadcast if we went to city halls." I very quickly picked up broadcast services, spoke to the folks involved and said, "How difficult is it?" The head of broadcast services said, "We just hook to the cable feed; it's a two-second operation." This is not a big deal, so that was blown out of the water.

0940

Then what did they come back with? They came back with: "There would be a cost because we would have to pay the cable company to use its broadcast and to rebroadcast it across. There's a charge." Have they even called Ted Rogers? Pick up the phone. I'll call him for you. I bet you we could make a deal. I bet you that the cable companies would see this as an important service, a civic service through their community cable process.

I heard today from Mr Gilchrist, when he was on CBC this morning and here again, that there isn't enough time between 6 o'clock and 7 o'clock for Hansard to pack up and for broadcast services, the translators, to pack up and to move everything to the city hall and to get set up again. You would think we only have one set of Hansard and one set of translators. When we travel on the road, like on Bill 26 — so that the members here can remember — when one day we were in Timmins and the next day we were in Sudbury, we didn't pack up the same team. The team went and set up ahead of time. These things are possible; these things are not reasons.

The question is, do you want to have an opportunity for residents to come out in large numbers and participate in this process? Mr Gilchrist makes much of his proposal for a five-minute presentation by individuals because that's the standard that's used in city halls for deputations. You know what the other standard is? That those deputations and that process are open to a whole range of people to come and sit in those galleries and be part of that process. So why is that an appropriate argument to put forward, Mr Gilchrist, when you want to limit to five minutes and it's not appropriate when we want to talk about moving the hearings around?

If you have a problem with respect to it only being the evenings, Mr Silipo's suggestion is one that could be undertaken by the subcommittee to look at alternatives. I can assure you from the point of view of our party, and I think I can speak on behalf of the Liberals, that we would give agreement through the House leaders' process for quick passage of an amendment to the motion allowing the committee sitting time. I don't think that should stand in the way of facilitating this process of the committee's travelling.

I also want to address another comment I heard from Mr Gilchrist. This happened to be this morning when he was spinning his line on the CBC, where he said, quite surprised: "We offered for the mayors to come and they've all declined. They don't want to participate in this." What bunk. The mayors have said, given that the question of the committee travelling to their city halls is still an open question, they would prefer to make their presentations in their own city halls. Yet he left all of the people listening to CBC this morning with the impression that the mayors had declined to participate in the hearings process. This is not an accurate reflection of what is going on.

Let me say that Mr Gilchrist speaks much of precedents. He speaks much of precedents when he refers to the five minutes, for example, that deputations have at city hall. What about the precedent here where we have an opportunity, when we're dealing with provincial legislation, not just to hear a deputation but to have a dialogue

between members of the committee and the presenters, to have questions and answers? That's a precedent as well. But precedents only mean something when they support the government's intended goal. I could cite all sorts of ways in which you have broken precedents in this province: Bill 26; this legislation, forced amalgamation without a process. There are lots of precedents that are around. These are just shams of arguments set up to support your intended goal.

I want to also touch on the issue of Citizens for Local Democracy, because here again you rely on precedents and say that this would be horrible, that we would be breaking precedents to have a group talk to us about process before the minister comes and makes his presentation on the bill, that there's something sacred about the fact that the minister should be allowed to have his say first. The whole debate that's taking place across Metro Toronto right now revolves around a question of democracy, of governance, of the style of governance, and there is no one who should have a greater say in that than the people who are being governed — not a minister, particularly a minister who sat on a task force that made a totally different recommendation before he was elected to government; not a provincial government.

People should have a say, and that's what these hearings are going to be about, and if the hearings aren't conducted in a way in which the residents of Metro Toronto feel that their voices are going to be heard, that it's going to be conducted in a way that will allow for open, democratic participation in civic affairs — because while this may be a provincial bill, this is about civic affairs — if there isn't a sense by the people that this process meets their needs, it totally discredits what we do here at the provincial level.

It is incredibly important that you rethink your position on this. We have the time now, we have the people sitting here now and we'd ask you to please think before you vote: Think about the importance of this to the democratic process and as an expression of your government's willingness to hear from the people of Toronto.

Mr Colle: I just wanted to point out that the Minister of Municipal Affairs was very explicit in the House, as was the Premier, when asked whether or not the meetings would go to the municipalities. The Premier, in answering our leader, Mr Dalton McGuinty, said he had no problem with agreeing to all his recommendations, of which one was to go out to municipalities.

Mr Leach in fact is quoted making a commitment to the citizens of East York on January 21 in the newspaper known as the East York Mirror. He was asked a question by the East York Mirror, "Is there a plan at this point to take these hearings on the road, to go to East York and Scarborough?" Mr Leach responded: "I'm sure we will do that. I agreed to that. No problem." So you have this clear directive from the minister who has carriage of this bill indicating to citizens that they will be going out to the municipalities, and the Premier reinforcing that. The minister in the House, in response to Mr Silipo, said he would do that. It's a deviation from the commitment made by the minister.

The other aspect of it is in terms of Citizens for Local Democracy. There's an opportunity here to reach out to

people who have serious concerns about this bill. Citizens for Local Democracy represents a cross-section of people across Metro. I don't think there's any fundamental roadblock to us doing that. If we do it, at least we attempt to demonstrate that we're willing to listen. I think the worst thing we can do is to try to hide behind procedural rules, saying, "We won't listen to this group because they're a group." This is quite an extraordinary collection of people and individuals who have come together because this is an extraordinary, revolutionary bill that's before us. We've never seen a bill of this magnitude, with this kind of impact, before the 2.5 million people of Metropolitan Toronto.

Just to follow up, Mr Leach said in the House, in answer to Mr Silipo on January 14: "I haven't talked to the House leader, but in discussion with the opposition House leaders, if they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objections to that." Again, the minister is quite clear: He wants the meetings to go out to the municipalities. I don't know, therefore, who is contradicting what the minister has stated publicly in the House and in the press over the last month, or why.

Even the Premier said, in response to Mr McGuinty, on January 21: "But we will provide for full and adequate and representative hearings that make sure all viewpoints are heard..." because Mr McGuinty asked whether he would take this out to various municipalities.

Just to conclude, I think that by doing this, going out to municipalities, letting them know that this is due process and they can partake in it, they can be there in person, we're essentially getting rid of some of the fear people have. It's so fundamentally different from what they're used to in terms of how government works, in terms of how local government is going to work, that we owe the people of Metropolitan Toronto at least that: going out to the city halls. If we can't get our act together in terms of getting our support staff out there — what kind of government is this that can't organize a trip to East York?

0950

Mr Gerretsen: You would think we were talking here about hearings that were going to stretch on for the next three or four months or so, the provincial equivalent of the Somalia hearings. We're talking about five weeks of hearings here, and only on specific dates. It's really too bad that these hearings have started off on such a confrontational tone and note. Maybe I'm still very naïve, but I would have thought that one of the reasons you have these hearings is to actually learn something. I hope to learn something from the presenters and I hope that the government members do as well. If it's a done deal, if that's what you're really saying to the people of Ontario, then what the heck are we doing here?

I hope that in the future we can do something about these public hearings. I've mentioned this on at least half a dozen occasions over the last six to eight months or so. I feel that in order for these public hearings to have any meaning at all, they should really take place after first reading of a law rather than after second reading, before each party stakes out their position on it. It seems to me

that what we're dealing with here is not just a process we have to go through.

I kind of get the feeling from the government of, "Well, at least if we go through this process, and we rush it through over the next five weeks, and we set aside some hearings, then at least people can't say we didn't have any public hearings." I hope that isn't the way we approach these hearings. I hope we approach them with an open mind and that views can change on this, because presumably, as a result of these hearings, we'll all be a little bit the wiser afterwards and maybe we can make some changes, effective changes, and it's basically up to you gentlemen and ladies sitting across from me here.

It seems to me that we're not just talking about a law that one particular government wants to put through and somebody else opposes. We are here talking about the future of our communities, the future of the neighbourhoods that people live in and the kind of representation that they will have later on. It's something that I fundamentally believe in, that's probably much more important than anything on a provincial or national level or scale. I think that most people relate more to their own communities and the services that are available there and the contacts they have with people there and the kind of community feelings they can get about a particular area. That's what we're talking about here, and I would hope that we will listen to the people who come before us, whether they're 1,200 or 600, with an open mind.

Quite frankly, to start it off on this kind of a confrontational note, when apparently the one group that had been told they could speak here for 15 minutes this morning at 9:30 is now being told, "You can't speak now; please go away," I don't think that's setting the right tone and I don't think we're doing our communities any good by that in the long run. Let's have an open mind on this, and I would ask the members on the government side — you control this process — to reconsider this and pass numbers 18 and 19.

Mr Silipo: Specifically on number 19, the issue of Citizens for Local Democracy addressing us on the procedure, you know, we could have heard them by now. We could have heard them and we could have actually probably heard some interesting and useful things that might have helped even the government members deal with the complexity of the procedural issues, let alone the substance that we'll get to as the process unfolds.

I guess I need some guidance from you, Chair, in terms of what we can do procedurally to try and stop this kind of — the discussion has been useful, but what I would like to do is to just move, whether it has to be an amendment to Mr Gilchrist's amendment, that the Citizens for Local Democracy be heard now.

The Chair: We have to deal with the motion on the floor. You can amend the motion. I guess that to do that you would have to amend the motion by deleting from Mr Gilchrist's motion point number 19.

Mr Silipo: Whatever has to be done. My point is that we should hear from the group now rather than continuing to go back and forth on this. I think we've all put our points on the record. Let's decide that we should hear them, give them a chance to talk to us, because I suspect that they want to talk to us in fact about the other 18

points that are on this list, as well as other things that they have to say to us, and I think the sooner that we actually hear from them the better.

The Chair: Effectively, Mr Silipo, your motion is to amend Mr Gilchrist's motion to delete point 19 from Mr Gilchrist's motion.

Mr Gilchrist: I think it's totally inappropriate. We have all those hundreds of people who have expressed an interest in coming and speaking to the bill, and it's my understanding that Mr Sewell and his associates want to speak to the process. We are not in a position to change the process. The subcommittee does what it does and the committee does what it does. We've just heard criticisms opposite at the suggestion that even though it was a two-to-one vote in the subcommittee, the other dissenting vote can't air that here in committee. You can't have your cake and eat it too. If you want to live by the rules, Mr Sergio wanted to suggest that the other 17 clauses — in fact, he would prefer all 19 to be considered sacrosanct. Well, if they're not open to debate, then clearly there's no point in listening to someone who wants to criticize that very same process.

If the suggestion is that the Citizens for Local Democracy want to make a presentation on the bill, of course; they are encouraged. I would expect them to speak towards the bill and I would even go so far as to suggest that I'm sure the government members would be quite comfortable with their being given the first spot after both the minister and the criticisms, and Mayor Tonks who has already accepted an invitation this morning. That would still afford them an opportunity this morning, before any of the other individuals or groups have made a presentation, and I would be quite prepared to have 19 changed to read that they would have the first spot after Mayor Tonks this morning.

Mr Sewell: We want to talk on process before the committee votes.

The Chair: Order, please. Excuse me, you don't have the floor. Mr Gilchrist has the floor. Mr Gilchrist is moving an amendment to the amendment.

Mr Gilchrist: No, I'm suggesting to Mr Silipo that if he wishes to withdraw his motion, I would amend my amendment to delete 18 and to alter 19, that the committee will offer 15 minutes and that we will consider their slot, subject to any further discussion we have about group time. If they want to spend their 15 minutes to talk about process or any other aspect of this bill, then that's fine, but I don't think there should be a suggestion that the other people who've expressed an interest in speaking to this bill should be prejudiced or should be treated any differently.

If there's a certain amount of time for each group or individual, then I think that's something we have to be consistent with across the board. If Mr Silipo wishes to withdraw his amendment to my amendment, I will amend my original amendment that 18 is deleted but 19 will read that the committee will offer 15 minutes to Citizens for Local Democracy as the first deputant after Mayor Tonks on Monday, February 3, 1997, to discuss the procedure of the committee hearings.

The Chair: I have Ms Lankin first and then Mr Silipo, unless you want to flip order.

Mr Sewell: We want to talk on process before you vote on it, not after you vote on it.

Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): Mr Chair, can we get some order here?

The Chair: Ms Lankin has the floor, please.

Ms Lankin: There are two fundamental problems with what Mr Gilchrist is saying. First of all, unless you allow for some informality here and we could actually have a dialogue with these people, we have no idea whether Citizens for Local Democracy have come here today prepared with the brief that they want to present on the content of the bill. We do know that they are here today, as a result of the subcommittee recommendation, prepared to speak to the issue of process and they want to speak to the issue of process before this committee takes a vote.

You're all sort of wrangled up here in terms of procedure and precedents, although I pointed out that you're willing to change precedent whenever it suits you. You're all sort of caught up in that and how this would be very difficult to do and we're in the middle of a debate on a bill.

Why don't we just agree, three-party agreement, to have a recess for 15 minutes which will be an informal session in which informally the members of the committee can stay here in this room and listen to what these people have to say? Then we reconvene formally as the committee, so we've not broken any precedents here, haven't done anything that's allowed citizens to actually enter the debate of politicians and everything's sacrosanct, but we have heard from a group which is here, which is prepared to make a presentation which I think is very important for members of this committee to at least be prepared to listen to before they take a vote on the issue of procedure which will bind this committee from here through the rest of the process.

I would suggest a request, Mr Chair, for unanimous consent for a 15-minute recess which we will use as committee members in an informal way to listen to the presentation of this group.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent for that? I see a no. Mr Silipo, you have the floor.

Mr Silipo: I don't think there's anything else that needs to be said. The turning down of that last practical suggestion I think said it all, Chair.

Mr Colle: Mr Chairman, in terms of where we're going to be going for the next five weeks, I'm asking you to use your discretion as Chair, because the government side has obviously been given certain direction on how to handle this important bill. But I would ask you as Chair to use your good judgement. I think I mentioned this to you at the subcommittee. Give the Citizens for Local Democracy 15 minutes to ask how this system's going to work, how the process is going to work, 15 minutes of recess. You as Chair I think will defuse a lot of, as I said, the apprehension and the whole aura of this being forced upon people without having due process. If you make that ruling of a recess informally, it allows the government to stand by their party position of not allowing them to speak. I think you're going to make this process work a lot better if you allow this 15-minute informal question-

and-answer period with the Citizens for Local Democracy. I urge you to consider that as Chair.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): My question is that if the members of the opposition parties make this special consideration for Citizens for Local Democracy and you rule that they be given 15 minutes for process, then would you not also have to make that consideration clear to every group and every individual that comes and makes their presentation to this committee during the next five weeks? Every group ought to have that same opportunity.

Ms Lankin: I'm going to test this out. I think that there may be an agreement emerging with my earlier suggestion for a recess in which there's an informal session which is off Hansard and that members may stay in the room and listen to a presentation from Citizens for Local Democracy. I understand, however, that in order to get agreement I must make the proposal for five minutes, so I'm now going to ask for unanimous consent for a five-minute recess during which an informal presentation by Citizens for Local Democracy may take place.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent? We'll recess for five minutes.

The committee recessed from 1002 to 1012.

The Chair: Our recess is complete and we're now back. I'd like to entertain voting, first of all, on Mr Silipo's amendment to Mr Gilchrist's motion.

Mr Silipo: If it helps, rather than going back, why don't we just vote on the original amendment and deal with that issue? I do have one motion I'd like to make following upon what we heard, but I'm quite happy to do that after the vote, if you wish to proceed with the vote on Mr Gilchrist's amendment.

The Chair: I need unanimous approval to vote first on Mr Gilchrist's motion.

Mr Gerretsen: Unanimous approval?

Mr Silipo: I'm withdrawing my amendment to Mr Gilchrist's amendment.

The Chair: Okay, thank you; that's what I needed. Now we're moving to Mr Gilchrist's motion. I have a motion to amend the subcommittee report by deleting points 18 and 19. That motion is —

Mr Gilchrist: It's just 18 now, clearly, and amend 19 to five minutes.

Mr Silipo: Mr Chair, a recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Jim Brown, Ford, Gilchrist, Hastings, Kells, Munro, Newman, Parker.

Nays

Colle, Gerretsen, Sergio, Silipo.

The Chair: I declare the motion carried.

Interruption.

Mr Silipo: No city hall. That's what they just turned down.

Interruption.

The Chair: Order, please. Any further motions on the subcommittee report?

Mr Silipo: I just want to clarify for the benefit of those people here and watching that, although my col-

leagues Ms Lankin and Ms Churley are here, they unfortunately aren't voting members of the committee because we only have so many votes per caucus. It's not a question of all of us who are here being able to vote.

I want to put another amendment — I guess it would be in the form of an amendment — to the subcommittee report on the basis of what we heard from the Citizens for Local Democracy group: that is that, first, the clerk be requested to make arrangements to move the hearings to the Macdonald Block as soon as possible; that, second — the clerk, I think, has given this assurance and so I just put this on the record for the sake of it being on the record — it be clear that people who are offered an opportunity to speak are given reasonable notice and that they don't lose their slot by virtue of not being available to speak at the particular spot they are first offered. I know that has been the practice the clerk is operating under, and I think it should be clear to everyone that this is what the committee also wants to see.

Third, the majority of members of the committee have obviously already turned down the fourth request, of the hearings being held in the council chambers, although I say to my colleagues opposite I hope this is something they continue to keep in mind. We may be able to come back to this at some point in the future. But the third point, in response to the point that everyone who wants to speak should be allowed to speak, with which I agree, I would like to move, then, Chair, that the House leaders be asked to address the issue of insufficient time being available to the committee to hear all the people who so far have expressed an interest in speaking and leave it at that for the time being, as maybe they can come up with some solutions to this. So those three parts.

The Chair: Any discussion on that motion?

Mr Sergio: Mr Chairman, I would like to propose something that I think Mr Gilchrist and the members of the government will find quite acceptable, since it seems that the cost of travelling to the area municipality is the main problem. I would further move that the committee consider holding public hearings at the various local municipalities, provided that each municipality will absorb the cost of holding the hearings in its own individual municipality. This way, whatever the cost may be, if it's \$500 or \$1,000, if the local municipality wishes to absorb the cost, then I think the problem has been eliminated and solved.

The Chair: With respect, Mr Sergio, I think that's a separate motion. We'd like to entertain discussion. We can hold that motion, and we can entertain discussion on Mr Silipo's motion.

Mr Sergio: Okay, that's fine.

The Chair: The next up is Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll be voting against Mr Silipo's motion for two very practical reasons. First off, the Chair has already ruled that you'll be giving only five minutes for votes and other practical considerations. But the other thing I would draw to Mr Silipo's attention is that both overflow rooms are empty on this, the morning I would have thought would be as important and as interesting to people to come out to hear the discussions, and I am told this room is accommodating all the people who want to be here today.

With the greatest of respect, I think there are organizational problems. You're clearly aware of the organizational problems of moving it over there. I think this is just something else that's taking time away from hearing the presentations I would have thought all members would want to hear this morning and this afternoon.

The Chair: Further discussion? Seeing none, on a recorded vote I'll put the question on Mr Silipo's motion.

Ayes

Colle, Gerretsen, Sergio, Silipo.

Nays

Jim Brown, Ford, Gilchrist, Hastings, Kells, Munro, Newman, Parker.

The Chair: I declare the motion lost.

We have a further motion. Mr Sergio, repeat your motion, please.

Mr Sergio: My motion, as I said before, is that the committee consider holding hearings in each municipality, provided that each municipality wanting to have a hearing in its own city hall will absorb the cost of such a hearing.

The Chair: Any discussion on that motion?

Mr Colle: As you know, the government is saying that basically it can't afford to go to East York, so the meetings have to be here. I think this is a very proper motion that addresses that concern the government has about cost in going to East York and Scarborough. If the government is worried about the cost and there's an opportunity for this cost, which is normally picked up by the Legislature, to be picked up by the municipalities and taxpayers of the municipalities, I think this is at least an attempt to have the people most affected by this legislation there at first hand as their city halls are closed down by this legislation.

I think it's an attempt for them to see face to face the government that's proposing the closing down of six governments and their city halls. Anything that can afford the opportunity for these taxpayers to witness what this government is about to do I think is part of the essential process we're talking about in participation in this revolutionary dismantling of local government.

1020

Mr Gilchrist: Very quickly, Mr Chair, because I know we all want to proceed to the actual deputations, but that cost was only one factor. There are a myriad of other practical concerns in trying to get from here to there in an hour.

When Etobicoke council hosted a referendum debate, a grand total of about 11 people showed up. I'm confident that the people who want to participate will have access to this building and will also have access to the fact that these proceedings will be broadcast — that was part of the motion — and will be carried at night, and far more people will benefit from seeing that than would ever show up at a town hall meeting.

Ms Churley: Unfortunately I'm not a voting member of the committee but at least I can get on the record.

I don't know if Mr Gilchrist is aware of how ludicrous and ridiculous he sounds when he talks about not being

able to organize travelling within the Metro area. We've got the minister here, and I suggest that sends out a very interesting, ironic message, in a way. Here they are trying to amalgamate all these different municipalities, saying "nice fit," and at the same time the parliamentary assistant today is saying that we can't, as a committee, possibly organize, that we don't have the ability to travel around Metro Toronto, it's so big.

This is a ridiculous argument. It sounds ludicrous. If you're going to argue against it, at least tell the truth, that you don't want the crowds of people in the room.

The Chair: Order, Ms Churley. That's out of order, imputing that.

Ms Churley: I withdraw those remarks about the truth, but I think everybody is aware that the committee does not want to travel to the cities because they don't want the large crowds that are opposed to amalgamation to be seen. They should admit that and stop this nonsense about the inability of the committee to organize to get to East York or Scarborough, for heaven's sake. It's ridiculous. You have members here today who come from those ridings. You manage to get here in a few minutes, don't you?

Mr Silipo: I don't want to prolong this but I wonder, if we offered to turn all the hearings in the council chambers into informal hearings, whether that might accommodate the members opposite. It seems to me that's the only way that they have any sense of what's going on here today. They refuse any reasonable proposal from this side of the table to accommodate. There are a myriad of reasons they like to put up against doing it. They now have also turned down, people should understand, moving these hearings into a larger room here at Queen's Park. It really just begs the question: What hope is there for people coming and talking to us about the real issues if on these procedural questions they won't even show any flexibility at all? We'll see.

Mr Sergio: Again briefly, because I think this is a total waste of taxpayers' time: I'm pleased that Mr Leach is here because when we travelled with rent control with this exact committee, with the exact members, with the exact members of staff we flew, we travelled throughout Ontario from east to west and north to south, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sudbury, Peterborough, Ottawa, whatever, at great expense. We heard no more than 12 to 14 people on a daily basis going to that very extensive cost.

We have just heard from the member that maybe not even 11 people are going to show up. With all due respect, let's give the people a chance. Let's give the people the opportunity at least to come to the various city halls and prove us wrong. I think that should be more than an incentive for the members of the government side to say, "Sure, let's go and hear what the people who are going to come out have to say."

If we travelled to Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie, whatever, to listen to six to eight people at great expense, I'm sure we can accommodate, and we should; I think we must. I think the minister would agree today that the committee should make every possible effort to travel to those places. We are talking about no more than 10, 12 miles from either side from Queen's Park.

To say that it's a question of time or cost I think is a red herring, and as my motion says, as long as the local municipality will absorb the cost, I think the members and staff should travel to those areas. I hope the members on the government side will see the positive side of the motion and will afford those people an opportunity.

Mr Gerretsen: I just reiterate that I don't think the procedural matter should become the issue. The issue should be the whole substance of the legislation that's before us. The minister has been listening to this for the last 10 or 15 minutes now, and I would like him to address at the appropriate time what he said on January 14, 1997: "I haven't talked to the House leader, but in discussion with the opposition House leaders, if they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objection to that." Whether he still stands by that or not, it's his piece of legislation. Surely what he says goes, and if he wants to have hearings in the various city halls of the other six communities that make up Metropolitan Toronto, he can make it happen. Let's hear from the minister to see whether or not he's prepared to do that.

The Chair: When we get through the committee reports, as we have to, the minister can put whatever he wants in his responses. I believe that the parties also have the opportunity to question and give comment. Any further debate?

Mr Silipo: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Gerretsen, Sergio, Silipo.

Nays

Jim Brown, Ford, Gilchrist, Hastings, Kells, Munro, Newman, Parker.

The Chair: I declare the motion lost.

Mr Silipo: On a point of order, Mr Chair: I don't want to belabour discussion on this because I'm also eager to hear from the minister on a number of points. I just want to be clear about what is going to happen on one of the points that was in the motion I put that was turned down about the clerk giving people reasonable notice. I hope it was simply inadvertence on the government members' part that they turned that down and that they don't really, seriously mean they don't want the clerk to give people reasonable notice.

The Chair: I think the clerk would like to speak to that.

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms Lisa Freedman): Just to clarify what's happening in my office at the moment, we're currently trying to schedule people for this Wednesday and Thursday. If people we contact are not available this Wednesday and Thursday, they're being offered a time slot next week. At this point we've opened up a two-week time slot. Once we get that scheduled we'll continue to open the further weeks, as we get to them.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Seeing no further motions, I'm going to put the question. Will the committee adopt the subcommittee report, as amended? All those in favour? Opposed? I declare the subcommittee report, as amended, adopted.

1030

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER
AND RESPONSES

The Chair: Our first deputant is the Honourable Al Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister Leach, you have half an hour.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen and members of the committee. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to set the stage for discussion of Bill 103, the City of Toronto Act. I am pleased to be here because I truly believe we are at a moment in time when the residents of Canada's greatest city have an historic opportunity before them.

We have the opportunity to ensure that Toronto enters the 21st century strong, united and ready to meet the needs of its citizens and the challenges of the future. We have the opportunity to create a governance structure that will save money, remove barriers to growth and investment and help create jobs.

In a larger sense we are faced with an even greater opportunity: the challenge of creating the best system of governance for the best city in Canada based on the best practices in government. With the City of Toronto Act we are proposing that the Metro regional government and its six municipal governments be replaced by a single government.

We have been clear about our intentions to create a new and unified Toronto from the start, because we know that people care about this community, the city they live in. People want to know what changes are being proposed and they want to know how these changes will make things better.

But it's also important to know, first of all, why change is necessary. Recently, *Fortune* magazine called Toronto the best city in the world to live and work in, but today a city can't just rest on its laurels, no matter how high the praise. Given the relentless competition from the global marketplace, Toronto has to move forward just to maintain its current position, and right now we are not moving forward.

Toronto is not growing as fast as the cities we compete against for jobs in business, and jobs are not being created as quickly. Instead of coming here, businesses and industries are leaving this area. We need to keep them here. We need to attract new business by maintaining the excellent infrastructure that has made Toronto the envy of the world. As competition with other cities increases, it gets harder to maintain and improve our infrastructure with two layers of government and seven municipal councils.

How do we solve these problems? We do it by working together, and we've already proven that we can. Right now, 72% of Metro services are already consolidated, including police, public transit, social services and ambulances. The six city governments and city bureaucracies divide among themselves only 28% of spending. I don't think anybody would suggest that the TTC would be more efficient if it was run in six fiefdoms and I don't think anybody would recommend cutting the police into six. These are excellent services that provide the community with a tremendous value for tax dollars.

Those who oppose completing the steps that began with the creation of Metropolitan Toronto, who oppose completing the move from seven governments to one, ignore how much of that work has already been done and how well it works now. We propose to bring that final 28% into one seamless city. We propose leaving behind seven competing governments, the seven roads departments, the seven planning departments. We propose leaving behind the six fire departments, each with its own administration, training facilities and communications networks. We propose leaving behind the overlap and duplication, the escalating costs, confused priorities and conflicting mandates, and too many levels of government.

Under the provisions of the City of Toronto Act, politicians would work together to carry this great metropolitan area forward instead of working hard to protect their own turf. Government would be simpler, easier for citizens to understand, and as politicians are reduced from 106 to 45, it would be greatly reduced in size.

At this point, I'd like to thank all of the members of this committee. I know that you're going to be spending long hours in the coming weeks on this issue. The hearings that begin today, February 3, will extend until Wednesday, March 5. There are a great many people who wish to speak to one Toronto, and we want to hear as many as possible. That's good. Legislative committee hearings are the best arena for the public voice to be heard on matters of public interest. The public has the opportunity to be closely involved with the parliamentary democracy in Ontario and members of Parliament can get a very clear picture of the concerns of the people they represent.

Today I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about some of the concerns I know people have about the proposed legislation.

People worry that local government will be less accessible to the average citizen, but we believe just the opposite will be true: Local government will be more accessible. The new act would create neighbourhood committees and would give citizens the chance to be directly involved in the issues that affect them where they live. They'll be able to tell their representatives on city council what they think local priorities should be, whether it's about recreational facilities, social needs or the delivery of services in their own community.

Neighbourhood committees are a way for municipal government to keep in touch with the wishes of local residents. They will help to preserve and promote neighbourhood identity. They'll make local decision-making possible and give everyone the chance to contribute to the future of their city. Councillors will carry those local priorities with them when they sit down at city council meetings. The way we see it, with a single, united system of government in Toronto, a direct line can be created from neighbourhoods straight to the top; from local concerns and priorities directly to city council.

As for concerns that a larger city will lose its neighbourhoods, history defies this argument. I grew up in Weston. Weston officially ended as a town more than 30 years ago, but it still thrives as a neighbourhood. So does Mimico, so does the Beach, so does Willowdale and so

does Guildwood. Our neighbourhoods will remain. They will remain strong and viable and they will be better for no longer having to deal with so many levels of government, so much duplication and overlap, so little understanding of who's responsible for what.

Today it hardly matters whether a local politician is accessible. The real problem is that that politician may not be accountable. Let's make the problem concrete. Let's say someone's street is not being plowed in the winter and the sidewalk of an elderly lady down the street is not being cleared. Who do you call? Is the road a Metro or a local road? Who's responsible for the sidewalk? Who clears away the pile of snow where the Metro sidewalk meets the city sidewalk? Who knows who's in charge of street lighting?

Under a simplified, united and understandable Toronto government, we would know who's responsible and we would know who to call, because your local councillor — the city councillor — would be responsible and accountable for everything from street lighting and sidewalks to fire protection, recreational programs and waste collection. That's why accountability and accessibility are not just government buzzwords. They mean something real, something important in people's lives. Most of all, you can't have one without having the other and you can't have democracy without both.

That's why the proposed City of Toronto Act is not just about efficiency and cost savings; it's also about making government representative and responsible to the people who elect it. In my book, that's what democracy means.

That word "democracy" has been tossed around a lot lately by those who oppose Bill 103 because the province has appointed a board of trustees to oversee financial transactions during the transition to the new city of Toronto. We've been accused of taking away the authority of elected officials here in Toronto and we've been accused of taking away the democratic rights of Toronto citizens.

In response to that I'd like to quote from an editorial I read just last week in the *Ottawa Citizen*. "Far from being undemocratic," the editorial said that the appointment of trustees was a "critical safeguard" for democracy. The board of trustees' only mandate is to make sure that municipal assets, assets that belong to the people, are safeguarded during a time of change. That's only prudent and it's in the best interests of all the taxpayers. The elected officials in Metro and the cities will still be carrying out their duties in 1997, just as you elected them to do.

When I listen to people talk about their concerns about this new act, it often seems that they're not worried about its substance — they're not worried so much about the creation of single, strong, accountable government — they're more worried about the process of getting there. The board of trustees is part of that process. Let me speak about the balance of the process for a bit.

1040

Upon passage, Bill 103 will set the foundation for change. More specific legislation will be introduced later this year. It's going to be a busy year, a year to plan and to construct a new, strong, unified government in

Toronto, a year to get ready to ensure that we have a strong and cost-effective city. What's important is careful planning.

A transition team will be appointed, made up of experts from the financial, government and administrative sectors, and people from the private sector. Their job will be to consult with residents, to ask the right questions and find the right answers.

Let me be clear: Both pieces of legislation and the work of the transition team are just the beginning. The real work of designing how the new government works will be the responsibility of the new council. They will make the decisions that best suit the people of Toronto.

We have also heard comment that the government is rushing this legislation through without consultation and without due deliberation. Again, the opposite is true. We based our decision to act on years of research, debate and public discussion. That includes the work of the GTA task force and the consultation carried out by the GTA review panel on the task force report.

Amalgamation of some local municipalities has been recommended by some Metro mayors and the Who Does What panel recommended that a strong, unified central core would help the entire GTA prosper and compete in the international marketplace. It includes the recent study by KPMG that shows that unifying government in Metro can save taxpayers up to \$865 million over the next three years and \$300 million every year thereafter.

I began today by saying that we're at a historic moment in the life of this city. We have a one-time opportunity ahead of us to take advantage of the best ideas in government innovation and planning. We have the opportunity to create a future for this great metropolitan area where government can do better with less.

We have a history of amalgamation in this province. It's been going on, for one reason or another, for many, many years. Does it save money? Yes, it does. Does it mean better services for less money? Yes, it does. Ottawa-Carleton, for example, decided to amalgamate its police services. They saved \$2.4 million a year. They coordinated waste collection in the region and saved \$6 million over three years. Where restructuring has been proposed or implemented, officials are expecting to realize savings to taxpayers, about 5% of the total municipal budget. Kingston and Hamilton-Wentworth are two examples.

Ottawa-Carleton and many other municipalities across Ontario are beginning to take advantage of these best practices in government. The people in Metropolitan Toronto have that same opportunity at this time in our history. We have the opportunity to construct a new foundation for government in this city to make a fresh start, taking full advantage of all of the best ideas available today.

I've heard the claims that amalgamation pushes costs up and not down. I recall a few months ago people saying that provincial governments couldn't lower income taxes. This is a new era. The creation of one Toronto will be the first attempt to unify a city government where the goal is to re-engineer government to do better for less. It will break new ground and I know it will be successful.

One government would make Toronto strong and united. It would become a powerful voice for the well-

being of all of its citizens and it would help to keep Toronto the most powerful engine for the economic interests of the rest of Ontario.

People worry that this city would be too big at 2.3 million people. Let's put this in perspective: It's not going to be any bigger than it is now; that's the population of Metropolitan Toronto. For people who count on the services that local governments provide, it's not going to be very much different than it is now, because as I said earlier, almost three quarters of the services are already delivered at the upper tier, Metropolitan Toronto.

But with one city our ability to attract new business investment would be enhanced; a single, united government would give Toronto greater clout in the international arena; and it would reinforce this city's role as Canada's major centre for commerce, industry and education.

A strong, united city of Toronto would meet local needs. It could answer the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities facing the entire Metro area. Communities and neighbourhoods would have more control over local decisions and services than they do today. The men and women who are elected to lead Toronto into the 21st century would be able to see beyond today's artificial political boundaries and make decisions that will be to the greater good of everyone in Toronto.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Leach. Next on our agenda is to move to the opposition and then the third party. Each would get a half-hour to make a presentation and/or ask questions.

I was going to ask you, Minister, to invite your staff to the table, which you've already done. Before we begin, I wonder if just for expediency's sake staff would read their names into the record for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms Elizabeth McLaren: Elizabeth McLaren, assistant deputy minister.

Mr David Spring: David Spring, legal counsel to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Chair: We'll begin a half-hour with the opposition, starting with Mr McGuinty.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I'm proposing to make a statement at the outset and then allow my colleagues the remainder of the time.

I appreciate the opportunity to set out the Liberal Party's position on the minister's megacity plans and I want to begin by being as clear and unequivocal as I possibly can. I want to say to you directly, we in the Liberal caucus are opposed to your plan to force the people of Metro Toronto into a megacity. We are opposed to your plan because we believe it will cause property taxes to increase, because it will lead to more cuts in services and because it will make government even more remote and distant from the people it is supposed to serve. We are opposed to your plan because it is the wrong plan and the wrong vision for one of the greatest cities in the world.

The debate we're engaged in today is not just about the kind of government that will exist in Metropolitan Toronto come the start of next year. This debate is about the kind of place Metro Toronto will be to live and work in come the next millennium. This is a debate about vision and quality of life and opportunity, the very reason that people come together to form a city in the first place.

We've listened to your plans to force the people of Toronto into a megacity. We've heard your plans to dump more than \$1 billion in new costs on to Ontario municipalities, nearly \$400 million in Metro Toronto alone. We've seen the \$1-million advertising campaign.

You had a choice between a vision of Toronto as a humane and caring place or a city where there is too much need and too few services, and in our opinion you made the wrong choice. You had a choice between a vision of Toronto where people are close to government and where differing community needs can be met in different ways, or big and remote government that treats everyone with uniformity and conformity. Again, in our opinion you made the wrong choice.

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Minister, to govern is to choose, and we believe you've made the wrong choices. There are many shades to this debate, but you choose to see everything in black and white. That's your government's style. You believe that in every situation there are only two choices: the government's or the status quo. Let me make it clear to you that I am not a defender of the status quo; quite the opposite. I understand the need for change.

We need an integrated transit system, not just in Metro Toronto, but across the GTA. Your vision takes us further away from that, not closer to it. We need an economic strategy, not just for Metro Toronto, but for the entire GTA. Again, your vision takes us further away from that.

Change is inevitable, but progress is not, so let's be careful. Let's not mistake the wrecking ball for innovation. Let's not change what many call the city that works into the city that used to work. There are undoubtedly things we have to change about Metro Toronto, but there are also things we have to be very careful to preserve.

Toronto didn't become a special place by forcing everyone to do everything the same way. This city has grown bigger and better through diversity, whether it's the diversity of people and cultures that have made this city their home or the diversity in local governments that allow different parts of Metro Toronto to respond in different ways to local needs. It's that diversity that has made this city special.

When you start tampering with that formula, when you start telling people that they have to do everything the same way and be governed in the same way, you risk destroying the very special kind of chemistry that made the city great.

Over the next several weeks, through these hearings and through local referenda, the people of Metro Toronto will send you a very loud and very clear message. The question is — and it's an important one — will you listen?

I want to say to you again very directly that I find your attitude and your government's attitude toward public input very disturbing. When it first became clear just how many people wanted to make presentations on this bill, you said that some kind of campaign was being orchestrated. What you see as conspiracy, I see as the very healthy desire of the people of Metro Toronto to have a say in the future of their community. What you see as unnecessary disruption and delay, I see as the very necessary process of democracy in action.

This morning I had the opportunity to read the city of York Guardian. There was a letter in it from one of the residents of that city, and I think you'll find it very interesting. The letter reads:

"I am a democratic person who lives in a democratic country. I believe that when one side speaks, the other side should listen. With our provincial government, democracy is not apparent. What we say does not matter, and it never will."

I sincerely hope that person is wrong. I hope you will listen closely to what the people of Metro Toronto will be telling you over the coming weeks. I hope you will understand why the people of this community want to have a say in the type of city they will live in. You can impose your will on the people of Toronto if that is your choice, but for you and your government, that will only be a short-term victory.

At the end of the day the will of the people will triumph, because the fight against the megacity didn't begin today and it won't end tomorrow or even at the close of these hearings. The people of this great community will continue to fight for their vision of a humane and caring city. They will continue to fight for their vision of a city of opportunity, with neighbourhoods that are able to meet local needs, and for my part and for the part of our caucus, the Liberal caucus, we will be right beside them fighting for that vision for as long as it takes.

Mr Colle: Thank you, Mr Leach, for your presentation. When John Ralston Saul phoned your office and talked to one of your assistants and asked him, "What city are you modelling this new megacity on?" the answer your staff person gave was, "Well, it's Chicago, it's New York City. Don't you want to be great like those two places?" What is your model of a megacity? What are you going to make it like?

Hon Mr Leach: I'm going to make it like Toronto. What we're looking at here is creating a situation similar to what we faced in 1954 when Metropolitan Toronto was created, when we needed a strong city core with the ability to serve its suburbs. What we have now is a similar situation where we're going to create a strong city core for the greater Toronto area to give us an opportunity to be competitive in the global marketplace, to make a city that's truly united and truly great. This is a great city. Everybody recognizes that and we have an opportunity now to make it even greater.

Mr Colle: Therefore, your staff were wrong and shouldn't have said, "Like New York and Chicago." In terms of the international marketplace, I know you've often commented, "The reason we're doing this, one of the reasons, is we're going to try and get the Olympics and when we become this megacity we're going to have a better chance at the Olympics." Aren't you aware that cities like Atlanta are divided into a number of cities? Aren't you aware that Sydney, Australia, which has the Olympics for the year 2000, by the way, is made up of 40 municipalities, one no larger than 300,000? Are you going to still keep to that line that one of the reasons we need a megacity is we can get the Olympics, given the proven track record that you don't need to have a megacity to get the Olympics if you want them?

Hon Mr Leach: Getting the Olympics would be a goal, but it's certainly not the major goal in creating a

single city. To me, creating a single city for an event that lasts about six weeks would not be appropriate. What we're trying to do and what we intend to do is to create a city that can compete in the global marketplace for economic development and trade for a long, long time — forever. This city has an opportunity now to become great. It's good; we have an opportunity to become great.

Mr Colle: Just getting back to that, you have taken some extraordinary measures. You've put these seven governments under trusteeship. You're putting in a transition team. You're eradicating these seven governments and you seem to be in a great rush to do it. What has gone so wrong with Toronto that a city that was recognized as being one of the leading cities in the world all of a sudden needs this revolutionary, dramatic dismantling? What is so wrong? Is there something we haven't seen in the press, or have you got some reports that show there's this present and imminent danger out there, that we have to take these dramatic measures that you're taking?

Hon Mr Leach: Your leader just said a few moments ago that the status quo is not acceptable, that the status quo is not an option. What's happened in the past, over the last several decades, is that we have suffered from procrastination, from various political parties not having the will to make the changes that are needed to bring the cities into the 21st century.

Mr Colle: But again, all this procrastination — somehow somebody or some people or some taxpayers or some elected officials didn't do a bad job, and we became a pretty reasonable place to live. I can imagine that if this were Cairo or Mobile, Alabama. Why this unprecedented dismantling of this magnitude? I just don't see. You haven't presented anything.

The other thing which is most frightening — and you've been warned by David Crombie, you've been warned by the board of trade. Your friends at the board of trade — you made this grandiose megacity announcement right at their doorstep, right in their dining lounge and you told them, "We're going to bring in a megacity." They're your friends. They're saying that this megacity, coupled with your downloading, endangers the economic viability of one of the great cities and that essentially what you're going to do is widen the tax gap between Toronto and the 905 by your downloading.

In other words, was this megacity created because you wanted to offload your provincial responsibilities for social services, family benefits, long-term health care, child care, drug benefits, because you wanted to dump your costs provincially on to the property taxpayers?

I ask you: Are you now going to reconsider? Because what you're doing is contradicting yourself. You said one of the reasons you're creating the megacity is to make it more competitive. You, in your other piece of legislation, are taking away the competitiveness because you are going to dump income-maintenance programs on the property taxpayers. Again, it's not the left wing and it's not the opposition. These are your friends who are saying you're putting your megacity into grave danger because these costs cannot be borne by the property taxpayers, that you're going to jeopardize Metro's economy. Even the president of the Bank of Nova Scotia I think is very

worried about this dumping and downloading on to the property taxpayers with this megacity.

If you're trying to make this megacity better, more competitive, more financially viable, why would you then download all these responsibilities and put it in the hole? In fact, I guess one of your great supporters at Metro — the Metro councillors and the Metro chairman — Shirley Hoy, who worked for you as a deputy minister, said at AMO on Friday that this downloading is putting your megacity in grave danger.

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Now it's up to over \$530 million that you didn't add up correctly. You forgot to add \$530 million that would be borne by the Metro property taxpayers. In other words, this \$530 million is going to put Metro in such a hole that no matter how unified it is and how big it is, how is it going to get out of the hole? It's basically going to have to put an extra \$530 million of your responsibility for health care and welfare on to the property taxpayer.

How are you going to get the Olympics if you can't pay for welfare and social housing? How are you going to get international business to come here when they pick up the Toronto paper and see, "Board of trade worried about the future of Metro"? This is what you've done, and I say to you you've done this because you've got this package which I call the mega-dumping package. You get rid of the local opposition so you can dump all your provincial responsibilities on to the taxpayers. There's nobody left to fight. You, the province, have walked away from all your responsibilities, and all the cutting and slashing has to be done by the local property taxpayers. This is what you've left. You've basically miscalculated — or you have calculated — a \$530-million hole.

On top of that, your own KPMG report says that this new mega-government is going to have to cut about \$350 million a year on top of that to fulfil your rationale for doing this, because you say your rationale is to save money. So this new government is going to have to find \$530 million to pay for and this new government is also going to have to cut another \$350 million every year.

I say to you, maybe your model is Detroit or maybe your model is New York or Chicago, and maybe that person in your staff office who talked to John Ralston Saul was right, that for some reason, somehow, some mad Machiavelli you have in your office envisioned a plan — a scheme, I should say — to destroy a city that is considered one of the best to live in.

In summary, Mr Minister, your figures don't add up. Metro is in the hole by \$530 million. It's going to have to cut another \$330 million. Never mind getting the Olympics; you'll be lucky if you get the Boy Scout Jamboree here the way Metro is going.

Hon Mr Leach: What have you got against Boy Scouts?

Let's go back to the beginning and the member for Oakwood's premise that the board of trade and David Crombie are opposed to what we're doing. The board of trade supports Bill 103. The board of trade supports going to a single city very strongly, and their chairman has been very outspoken about that. David Crombie supports Bill 103. David Crombie supports going to a single city. So if you're working under the assumption

that the two parties you mentioned are opposed to the actions being taken by this government on Bill 103, you are mistaken.

Mr Colle: Mr Minister, what I said is —

Hon Mr Leach: I'm not finished.

Mr Colle: — that the rationale you've been giving for creating megacity is to make it more financially viable, to save money. But what you're doing is making people like Crombie stand up and say — there is a connection, you might say, between property taxes and this megacity. Do you agree there? Is there somewhat of a connection?

Hon Mr Leach: Yes. I'm glad you brought that up, because the board of trade also supports the government's proposals for property tax reform and Mr Crombie supports the government's proposals for property tax reform.

Mr Gerretsen: Not the way you have proposed it.

Hon Mr Leach: This government is taking education off the residential property tax, something that the citizens of this entire province have been looking for for years. Studies that we have done on the economic savings indicate that there will be substantial savings as a result of amalgamation, in excess of \$300 million a year.

Mr Gerretsen: Release those studies.

Hon Mr Leach: The numbers being put forward by the Metropolitan Toronto group, the numbers that I saw, show the entire costs of social housing being put into effect on day one, and that's obviously not the case. That's a program that will be phased in over several years. We have a great opportunity here by amalgamating this city into one unified community to come up with best practices for the delivery of services that will provide the most economic, affordable and best services available to the taxpayers.

Mr Colle: Mr Minister, there is a bit of a connection between what your plan is going to do — what your package is going to do to the Metro property taxpayers, commercial and residential — to your megacity plan. That is why, again, the board of trade has said that because of your dumping and offloading of your responsibilities, you are putting this new city into jeopardy, that it's not going to work if you are going to dump things like social housing on to the property taxpayers. That is why they're saying you can't have one without the other. In other words, how is this city going to be competitive, how is it going to protect neighbourhoods, if they can't undertake to respond to the new responsibilities you've given them?

The board of trade has said your scheme is going to increase property taxes for businesses an average of \$7,900 per business, and residential, \$350 per home. With the new figures, because now we know we've got drug benefits too, your supporters at Metro are saying this is even going to be higher. So how is this city going to work, as I said, better? How is it going to provide for strong neighbourhoods? How is it going to provide for better services when you are dumping almost like a tax time bomb on their lap? It's such a tax time bomb that everybody from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation is saying this is a shell game that's going to destroy Metro: the board of trade, Gordon Chong, all your supporters who say maybe megacity by itself, but now they know

that the other shoe has dropped. You can't have megacity by itself because your scheme is basically to have this megacity that now will be in charge of trying to protect neighbourhoods at the same time trying to provide for seniors, trying to provide for people on social assistance.

I remember when this exercise first started. It was about levelling the playing field between 905 and 416. Even Hazel McCallion, another Conservative, says this is a mega-mistake. You know, Mr Minister, that most of the social housing, most of the welfare, is in Metro; the 905 doesn't have that kind of obligation. So you're going to put Metro at a competitive disadvantage to the 905. Never mind that the level playing field is not going to exist; you're creating a canyon between the 905 and 416 that is not only not going to work to the benefit of Metro citizens and taxpayers but is going to destroy the viability of the GTA.

The GTA won't work if you've got Metro with a tax disadvantage, because we know that in the city of Vaughan there isn't the social housing. There isn't in Markham the need to serve the elderly. You know there's a growing elderly population here in Metro. All you've done through your midnight fax machines is you've said that anybody who questions any of this material is wrong. Like here: "Do the Math. Metro Taxpayers Win."

You're saying that the Metropolitan council and its financial experts are wrong and you're right. In other words, the \$500-million gap now that exists in Metro doesn't exist; they're not adding up right. I say to you, Minister, you are putting Metro and its property taxpayers and the whole GTA in jeopardy by not listening to people who are your supporters, who are saying: "What's the emergency? What's the rush? Whose agenda is this?"

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Hon Mr Leach: To the member for Oakwood, it's interesting to note that the individuals and the corporations that the member stated are opposed to our actions, regardless of the separation of services issues, still support strongly a single city. Gordon Chong strongly supports a single city after taking into consideration the changes in the separation of services. The board of trade still supports the single, unified city after consideration of the changes. David Crombie, again, continues to support a single city despite having concerns about having social services on the property tax base. Despite their concerns about that issue — and we're quite prepared to talk to them about that specific issue and we intend to talk to them about that specific issue — they still strongly support a unified, single city for Toronto.

Mr Colle: Just one final comment, one final question. On this thing about going out to the municipalities, as you know, in the House you were quite clear in saying you didn't oppose, you supported, the hearings going out to the cities. To the East York mayor you said, "I have no problem taking these hearings to East York and Scarborough."

Minister, will you not tell your committee members on the government side that it is your will, as you stated in the House and in the press, that you want these hearings, that you're not afraid to go out to East York, you're not afraid to listen to the people in those municipalities and take these hearings out there? Will you not clarify that

with your government members, who are contradicting what you said in the House?

Hon Mr Leach: The purpose of these committee hearings is to give the citizens of the Metropolitan Toronto area an opportunity to present their views to this committee. I don't know what you accomplish by going out to the cities.

Mr Colle: You said you wanted that. You said that in the House.

Hon Mr Leach: What I said in the House was that it was up to the House leaders —

Mr Colle: No, you said there's nothing wrong with that; you'll support that. "If they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objections to that."

The Chair: Mr Colle, you've posited a question. You should allow an answer.

Hon Mr Leach: If the goal is to give the people of the greater Toronto area or the people of the Metropolitan Toronto area an opportunity to present their views to this committee, I think this is the most appropriate forum to do it in. I don't know what you accomplish by putting on a travelling show.

Mr Gerretsen: Let me quote to you exactly what you said in the House.

Interjections.

The Chair: Order. Mr Gerretsen, you have four minutes remaining.

Mr Gerretsen: All right. I'm quoting you: "I haven't talked to the House leader, but in discussion with the opposition House leaders, if they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objections to that." Do you still stand by that and will you give your parliamentary assistant, somebody who works for you, instructions to make sure that these hearings get around to the various city halls in Metro Toronto?

Hon Mr Leach: No. I think the most appropriate forum to have the hearings is here.

Ms Churley: Is that written down, Al?

Mr Gerretsen: Okay, so you've changed your mind on that, then.

Hon Mr Leach: It's more appropriate to give people an opportunity to travel here so they can speak to this committee. The House is in session; most of the committees have to be here. I agree with the decision that the committee made.

Mr Colle: It doesn't have to be here in the evenings.

Mr Sergio: Minister, just in the time that I have left here, the board of trade, Mr Crombie, the United Way and others — I don't know which newspaper you have been reading, which commentary or even editorials. They have said that they are not in favour of the downloading, the effects of the megacity as you have proposed it. Are you still in favour of downloading all the extra services on to the municipalities, and do you still claim that this will lower taxes? If you do, can you please provide all the information — the figures, the data — backing up your claim?

Hon Mr Leach: Mr Chairman, our purpose in being here today is to talk about Bill 103, and all the individuals and all the corporations the member has just men-

tioned favour going to a single, united city despite the concerns they have about some of the separation of service —

Mr Sergio: Are you willing to release all that information to us?

Hon Mr Leach: — and we are prepared to sit down with the agencies, with AMO, with the board of trade, with Metropolitan Toronto, and discuss the issues they have concerns about. We're quite prepared to do that.

Mr Sergio: Are you willing to release all the information, all the data?

Hon Mr Leach: They are still in favour of a single city.

Mr Sergio: You are not answering my question. Are you willing to release all the data, all the information, supporting your claim?

Hon Mr Leach: We will have information that will be made available to those we have the discussions with.

Mr Sergio: Don't you think this committee should have all that information so we can make a proper —

Hon Mr Leach: This particular committee is dealing with Bill 103, which deals with the amalgamation of the six cities in Metro, plus the elimination of Metropolitan Toronto. We're not here to discuss or debate the merits of the services being divided between the municipalities.

The Chair: There's about a minute remaining.

Mr Sergio: Wouldn't you want to listen to the people, providing them all the information necessary so they can come to the hearing?

Hon Mr Leach: We are listening to the people. That's what we're here for. That's what we're in this room for right now, to hear representatives from the various communities come in to speak.

Mr Sergio: Why don't you provide the people of Metro with all the information so they can come to this hearing with informed minds and then speak for or against your proposal? Why don't you release that information before? Why don't you release it now?

Hon Mr Leach: All the information on creating a single city is available to them at this point in time.

Mr Sergio: We have no information.

Hon Mr Leach: We will have other legislation coming forward on the separation of the delivery of services, about taking education off the property tax, about having the municipalities responsible for hard services, having the municipalities responsible for 100% of the delivery of social services and 50% of the cost.

I know what you would like: that the municipalities spend and we pay. That was the recommendation, that the municipalities deliver the service and the province pays.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. We've come to the end of the half-hour for the opposition party.

Mr Sergio: I have another 30 seconds.

The Chair: Actually, you don't have any time left. We're now into the half-hour for the New Democratic Party, starting with Mr Hampton.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I'll take a couple of minutes because there are a couple of matters we need to draw particular attention to, and then my colleagues have some statements they would like to make.

First of all, there is something quite absurd happening here. Committees of this Legislature regularly travel to

places like Windsor, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Sudbury, Hamilton, Timmins, Peterborough, Kingston to hear people, to ensure that people have an opportunity to be heard. For you, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and for your government and for government members of this committee to say that this committee can't possibly travel to North York city hall or to Scarborough city hall or to Etobicoke city hall or to the city of York or the city of East York to hear people, to listen to people who have indicated that they want to be heard, for you to take that position that you can't travel to those cities and to those locations is absolutely absurd.

Second, I want the minister to understand and to get it very clear in his head why we are opposed to your megacity concept. As one observer put it, when I had a chance to meet and talk with him, he said that the megacity concept and the government's downloading of health care and social assistance on to municipal taxpayers are intimately connected. The megacity concept is intended to create the fog that will facilitate your mega-downloading of health care and social assistance costs on to municipal property taxpayers.

To put it bluntly: First you drug the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto with your megacity concept, then you mug them with your downloading of the costs for health care and social assistance. That's exactly what this scheme is all about. The two concepts are intimately connected. First, you mug the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto with your fog about megacity, and then, while they're trying to figure out the confusion you've created, you download huge costs related to social assistance and health care. That's what it's all about. That's why we are so opposed to what you're doing here.

My colleagues have some comments and some questions for the minister, to deal with some of the other issues.

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Hon Mr Leach: Did you want me to respond to your comments?

Mr Hampton: You'll have your chance later. This is our time.

Hon Mr Leach: I didn't know whether you wanted me to respond.

Mr Silipo: Minister, you'll get lots of chances to answer because we've got a number of questions we want to put to you.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): That's NDP democracy.

Mr Silipo: Somebody's concerned about democracy over there.

Mr Hampton: What an incredible revelation.

Mr Silipo: That's a good start. Maybe we're going to start something.

Minister, I want to start with the process we have just begun here this morning. In your presentation, you lauded the legislative committee process and how great it is that this is part of the process. I want to try to understand from you, what parts of this legislation are you open to hearing change suggested to in this process?

Hon Mr Leach: Are you waiting to hear —

Mr Silipo: I'm asking you a question, yes.

Hon Mr Leach: I'm sorry. I thought you wanted to make all your statements first.

We're open to hearing all suggestions. What changes and what amendments we might make to this act are unknown at this time, until such time as we've heard all the input from the deputations. At this point in time I haven't heard anything that would cause me to change my view that a single, unified city is the most appropriate move for this community. However, we are quite prepared to have the residents of this city come here, make their presentations, hear them. If they make a point or a case that would cause us to make an amendment or change the bill in any way, we would be glad to do that. Once we've heard all the deputations, we'll do that.

Mr Silipo: I heard your parliamentary assistant last week at some time, and I can't remember whether it was in the House on second reading debate or exactly where, but he indicated that already — I think these were the words — there are some amendments you have contemplated making. Could you give us some idea of what those amendments might be?

Hon Mr Leach: The trustees, in their meetings with the CAOs from the various communities, have suggested several amendments in terms of the reporting by the communities to the trustees. There are some amendments that will simplify and make the process a little better as we go along.

Mr Silipo: I wonder if you would be willing to share those with us, sooner rather than later, so that if people are speaking to the committee and they have concerns about particular provisions which may disappear from the bill or may be changed, they have a chance, as we would, to take a look at those.

Hon Mr Leach: Again, we're not proposing any amendments at this time. What I said is that they have suggested some amendments. We would prefer to wait until we hear the deputants and the speakers and the organizations comment on this bill, and then we will determine whether there is actually a need to have amendments. I'm sure there will be. I don't think a piece of legislation has gone through this Legislature that hasn't had amendments of some sort, and I'm sure this one will as well. But we would prefer to wait until we have the views of the citizens known to us.

Mr Silipo: You mentioned the role of trustees, and that's one of the areas I want to pursue with you. In your comments you said that the board of trustees' only mandate is to make sure that municipal assets are safeguarded during a time of change. If that's your primary concern or your only concern with respect to the board of trustees' role, why does section after section in this bill completely tie the hands of the municipally elected politicians for the next year if this legislation is passed? Why is it that they basically can't go to the washroom without getting permission from the board of trustees?

Hon Mr Leach: That's a ridiculous statement. The municipalities, the elected councils of all six boroughs in Metropolitan Toronto, can continue to do business just as they have done in the past. The trustees are put there to safeguard the assets of the taxpayers of this community. It has happened in other jurisdictions that large severance packages to senior employees have been provided and then people hired back the next day. Will that happen here? I doubt it, but you're far better off having that

safeguard for the taxpayers, to make sure their assets and their reserves are kept intact.

If the councils of the municipalities carry off their business in a responsible manner, as I'm sure they will, they won't even know the trustees are there.

Mr Silipo: That's my point. If you're so sure they will carry out their responsibilities in such a responsible manner, why do you need to have all these provisions hanging over their heads? If you're concerned about municipalities potentially getting rid of municipal assets, why not simply put in a provision in the bill which says municipalities are not allowed to dispose of their assets, period? Why do they have to provide monthly reports? Why do you have trustees be the ones who will set up the structure in terms of who's going to be the senior administration? Why do they have to have monthly reports in to the trustees? Why, as I say, do they at every turn have to seek and get permission from your group of three unelected, appointed officials if your only concern and your primary concern is that they not dispose of municipal assets?

Your words seem to indicate that you have some level of trust for the elected officials, but your actions in terms of the bill instead show complete contempt for the elected officials. The bill says very clearly that you don't trust them at all, that in fact what you want to do is make sure that every single conceivable action they take has to be approved by the trustees.

Hon Mr Leach: That's not correct. I guess some of my concern arose as a result of the motion passed by the council of East York on December 18 to explore ways of disposing of the assets of the borough of East York to a non-profit organization. That alone should be an indication that there's a need to have a safeguard. I think that's only prudent.

Why don't we just put something in the legislation that says you can't sell assets? Well, perhaps there might be a case where it would be appropriate for a municipality to sell an asset, and you would want them to have the ability to do that if it is appropriate. All we want to ensure is that the council of the new city and the taxpayers of the new city will have the rights to those assets that reside in each of the seven governments and the revenues there as well.

Mr Silipo: I would remind you that the actions of the East York council that you mentioned were taken after you introduced the legislation, so unless you knew that that's what they were going to do, that couldn't have been a reason for your having drafted the legislation prior to that.

Hon Mr Leach: And isn't that scary? After they knew that there would be trustees to oversee the actions, in spite of that, they passed a motion to explore ways and means of disposing of the assets. Doesn't that concern you? It concerns me that taxpayers' assets would be disposed of.

Mr Silipo: Again, if that's your concern, you can deal with it through far less draconian measures than what you're putting in place. There is no justification whatsoever for you to put these three appointed people — I look forward to them appearing before the committee and hearing more about how they're going about doing their work. But there is no justification for you giving these

three appointed people powers that are far greater, quite frankly, than you now have as the minister responsible, to the point that you say any decisions they make cannot even be reviewed by a court. If they make an error, you're protecting them from the normal process that any citizen now has against their duly elected officials, be they municipal or provincial.

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Doesn't that tell you that what you're doing here? Do you understand what you're doing on that score, or is this just something that maybe somebody convinced you was necessary that maybe on second thought you might not so readily agreed to?

Hon Mr Leach: I think it's far better to be safe than sorry. I would far prefer to have three individuals who are very experienced in municipal financing — the chairman, Jack Pickard, was the treasurer for Metropolitan Toronto for just about all of its existence — and to have them there to provide sober second thought to municipal councils that may — and by their actions have indicated they're considering it, particularly the city of Toronto, again, which passed a motion saying they should explore the disposal of assets in a similar fashion to East York. To me, that's totally inappropriate and, to me, if there was ever any need or any doubt about the need to have a board of trustees, those two motions settled that question.

Mr Silipo: Minister, you talked about savings, and savings, I think you said, based on history. Can you tell us, please, outside of the KPMG study you like to flaunt around, what other studies you have or have seen that actually indicate that moving in this direction is going to save money?

Hon Mr Leach: There are a number of amalgamations that have taken place around Ontario over the years. Every year there are a number of amalgamations. As a matter of fact, there are 350 municipalities in Ontario that are involved in amalgamations right at the present time, all with the intent of saving money.

The city of Hamilton and Hamilton-Wentworth are proposing to save 5% of the budget. Kingston, for example, is proposing to save 5% of its budget through the amalgamations that are going on there. In the city of Ottawa, as I mentioned in my remarks, when they amalgamated the police departments of the various municipalities into one, it was done for cost savings and efficiency. Amalgamating the disposal of waste, of garbage, was done to achieve cost savings and efficiency.

That's what will happen with the services that are amalgamated here in a single city. You will gain those cost savings and efficiencies from having a single, unified city and not seven planning departments, six fire departments and six parks departments. All the savings that will accrue to the city as a whole as a result of those amalgamation will certainly save money.

Mr Silipo: It would be interesting for you to share those studies with us because I think what we will find when we look at them is that, just like the KPMG study, the bulk of those savings don't come from the amalgamation; they come from looking at better ways of doing things — that's in fact what your KPMG study showed — but which have nothing to do with amalgamation by and large.

If you read the KPMG study, that's what it says. It says that most of the savings don't come as a result of amalgamation. It also pointed out that the end result of the studies was the reduction of some 4,500 jobs at the end of the day, and one of the reasons you use for doing this is that this is going to help create more jobs within the city of Toronto. The first indication we have is that if you proceed along this line, we're going to see a reduction in jobs, jobs that are now going into actually delivering basic services to people across Metropolitan Toronto.

In terms of some of the other examples you mentioned, Minister, one of the interesting differences of course in what's happening or what you've done here in Metropolitan Toronto versus what is happening in Hamilton, in the Ottawa-Carleton area or anywhere else is that there, good or bad, there have been or continued to be some processes in place. The citizens, the elected officials locally have an opportunity to talk with each other and to look at the different alternatives to amalgamation.

Here, you've decided the course of action. Here, you've decided what's best for people and that's one of the affronts that continues to disturb and offend people across Metropolitan Toronto, that here in the largest municipality where there should be at least the same kind of process there has been in many of the other municipalities, despite the fact that what you're doing now is completely opposite to what you said in the last election you would do, you have chosen to go completely opposite. You've chosen to completely disregard any sense of process whatsoever. You misuse studies like the Golden task force report, which had no recommendation at all about getting rid of local municipalities, yet you include it in your list, assuming or wanting people to assume that it supports what you're saying when it supported the opposite direction of what you're moving in.

That's why we're going to continue to oppose what you're doing, going to continue to put you to the task of justifying line by line what you're doing in this bill, because you won't be able to at the end of the day.

Hon Mr Leach: You're mistaken when you say that the Golden report didn't support this. The Golden report supported amalgamation. They recommended going to four cities, which meant there was an elimination of two cities. Don't forget that.

When we looked at the Golden recommendation for four cities we gave it considerable review and a lot of attention because that was its recommendation. We looked at, how do we make this work? What we found was that when you try to dissolve down the 70% of the services that are presently provided at the upper tier, you have to divide the police department into four, or the transit into four, or social services into four; it doesn't work.

What did they recommend? They said, "If that's a problem, we'll set up special purpose bodies." You end up with a magnitude of special purpose bodies, and who are they responsible to? "Then we'll set up a committee of individuals from each of the four cities to oversee them." What have you done? You've just re-created Metro. You haven't accomplished anything.

On taking a look at that and reviewing and taking into consideration that about 70% of the major services are already at a single city delivery, it is far better to move those remaining services up into a single tier and have one unified city, get rid of all the artificial boundaries, create a city that would be strong and viable to take us into the 21st century, and that's the decision we made.

Mr Silipo: Why didn't you come to that conclusion a year and a half ago prior to the election? Why did you come to the opposite conclusion then? Why did you say then that you were going to get rid of Metro and you were going to then deal with the services at the local level by pushing some of them down to the local level and some up to the provincial level? You had all the information then. You promised the people of Metropolitan Toronto that you would not be getting rid of their local municipalities when you went into the election. You're the government and the party that likes to run around saying, "We're doing what we promised," and you're doing the opposite of what you promised.

Hon Mr Leach: Quite the contrary.

Mr Silipo: No, it's not quite the contrary. You're doing exactly the opposite.

Hon Mr Leach: We're doing exactly what we promised. We promised to get rid of a layer of government and we promised to get —

Mr Silipo: Isn't it interesting that Joyce Trimmer doesn't agree with you and she chaired that task force you were a member of?

The Chair: Order, please. Let's have some order.

Hon Mr Leach: I was a member of that task force and I know what the recommendations were and we carried out all eight of those recommendations that were in that task force. I was there; you weren't.

Ms Churley: We just have a few minutes left so I want to pick up on that. I have here A Vision for the Future, dated April 3, 1995. There are opening remarks here from Mike Harris, MPP:

"I would like to begin with one fundamental reality. When we talk about different levels of government and who should tax and pay for what, let us remember — there is only one taxpayer.

"We must end the old politics of downloading one government's problems on to another."

That's one statement that was made. The other one is that quite clearly Mike Harris said, "These findings are leading the task force to conclude that Metro regional government in its current form must go." Later on, "Eliminating Metro government would result in the elimination of regional taxation," and on and on, very clearly.

I was at that GTA debate and I heard myself — you said you were there — the now Premier say that he would get rid of the Metro level of government and keep local government. That is not what happened here.

There is a consensus, I believe, that change needs to happen. All the studies I'm aware of, including the Joyce Trimmer study and the Golden report, talk about the need for change, but one of the overriding concerns you haven't really addressed is the restructuring of some kind of regional GTA governance. That has not been done here. What is happening is you're getting rid of local

government and going in the exact opposite of what the Premier said when he was trying to get elected. You broke a fundamental promise.

Hon Mr Leach: That's not true.

Ms Churley: It is true. You and your government have shown contempt for the people of Toronto, and I'll tell you why.

Hon Mr Leach: That's not true.

Ms Churley: You broke a promise that you made during the election campaign, and then when you decided to do an about-face and do it this way, you haven't given people the opportunity to really engage in debate. We have the press involved in this debate. There are various members of the press here today — I recognize them — who are taking different positions. That's fine. The public out there, Minister — I can tell you in my riding because I've been doing a lot of work in the riding and about — a lot of people, still do not know what's going on.

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I get angry when I hear you and the Premier and the member for Brampton South and others, and the editorial in the Toronto Star, for that matter, when it criticizes the city councillors who are working with local people to try to get their message out. We have the Premier spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money extolling the virtues of what he believes is the correct route to go, ie, megacity — with the good side of his face, I may add, well-lit, very slick ads — millions of taxpayers' dollars being spent doing that.

Yet when the city of Toronto, working with local residents and the local councillors, tries with much less money and resources to put the other side out, there's criticism from you, from your government and from some of the editorials in the papers. I want to point out that is showing contempt for the people of Toronto and the elected representatives, whom we elected, to try to get the other side of this message out.

Hon Mr Leach: To respond to your question about what we committed to as a government during the pre-election time frame: We indicated that we would get rid of Metro and we're doing that. We indicated that we would reduce the number of politicians and we're doing that. We're doing that by creating a single, one-tier government to provide all the services that are there. We're scrapping Metro, we're scrapping the five cities and the borough.

Ms Churley: Yes, but you said you'd keep local government and you're not.

Hon Mr Leach: You also mentioned that you were concerned that we weren't dealing with the GTA. We're establishing a GTA services board. We have an individual, Milt Farrow, working on that. At the present time —

Ms Churley: Why aren't you amalgamating, by the way, in the GTA, in the 905 area? We know that there are, compared to say the Metro Toronto area, lots of politicians. If you want to get rid of politicians, why just rid of politicians in the Metro area? Why aren't you doing the same thing in the GTA? Why are you separating out Metro?

Hon Mr Leach: As I mentioned earlier, there are over 350 municipalities in the process of amalgamation and downsizing and restructuring and eliminating politicians

and their communities. We have proposals from Halton, from York, from Durham to downsize the size of their councils and we agree with that. What we don't agree with is that you can have a one-size-fits-all, that you deal with every region in the same manner, because every region is different and every region should be explored on its own merit as to what's best for the taxpayers in that region.

Hamilton-Wentworth is not the same as Halton; Metropolitan Toronto is not the same as Ottawa-Carleton. We'll look at each individual region and determine what is best for the citizens of those regions, not take a cookie cutter and slam it down.

Ms Churley: Okay, but very clearly, in the studies, and quite rightly — one of the things I agree with what you say is, there have been lots and lots of studies done and there needs to be action. I agree with that. But clearly none of the studies — except for your own bogus study that was done in three weeks and nobody was talked to — suggest doing what you're doing. I find that alarming and frightening, that you're going ahead and not taking the advice of people who have studied it for years.

What I want to know is: The overriding problem that emerged in studies around and about the GTA in terms of competition and all of that, the overriding concern, was the kind of coordination within the GTA; that is what has been causing a lot of the problems we're talking about here today. Amalgamating the local governments is not going to solve that. You're fixing a problem that doesn't really exist. That's what I don't understand.

Hon Mr Leach: What you have here is tremendous overlap and duplication. Why you need seven parks departments —

Ms Churley: You can fix overlapping of duplication without amalgamating and getting rid of our local, accountable councillors. There are lots of ways to do that.

Hon Mr Leach: You will have a local accountable council. Let's look at what the four mayors proposed. They proposed reducing the number of politicians by about 50%, going to 48 councillors. We're proposing 44. What's the difference? We'll have one elected mayor; they want six. Right now you have, as I pointed out, six fire departments, all with their own administration, communications and training. The waste and duplication just on that operation should be enough to indicate that going to a single city will create a better community.

Ms Churley: There's no proof of that, though, Minister.

Hon Mr Leach: Even the parks departments themselves met and said that yes, there would be savings if we amalgamated, yes, it would end duplication and overlap. The police department has said a single city will work better. The people who deliver all the services out there say that yes, there are savings and there is better service delivery by going to a single city.

Ms Churley: Could I ask you one last question here? Do you support the kinds of advertising your government has been engaged in, faxing people in the middle of the night without a covering sheet saying who it's from, the Premier going on TV spending millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to extol the virtues of your plan, that your government was deemed — or you in fact

were deemed — by the Speaker as being in contempt of the Legislature, therefore of the people?

Hon Mr Leach: That's not correct, and you know that.

Ms Churley: We can quibble over that. At the end of the day your members voted against that. Do you support the kind of advertising that is spending taxpayers' money that your government is doing?

Hon Mr Leach: We believe there's a strong need to get the message out to people in the most appropriate fashion. In my community, far before the government decided to put out any advertising, we were flooded with anti-amalgamation propaganda by the cities. I had the mayor, in a note delivered right to my door, pointing out all the reasons. If you want to talk about an undemocratic process, the city of Toronto taking taxpayers' money and giving it only to those who oppose —

Ms Churley: So it's okay for you to do it but it's not okay for the city of Toronto to do it. What's the difference? You're not giving both views. That's my point here.

Hon Mr Leach: We're not giving money to intervenor groups either.

The Chair: Order.

Ms Churley: That is my point here, Minister.

Hon Mr Leach: We're not giving money to the special groups to go out and hold a tug of war.

The Chair: Order, please. Minister and Ms Churley, unfortunately we've come to the end of the 30 minutes for the third party. Thank you, Minister, for coming forward today. I appreciate your coming forward for the time you did this morning.

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ALAN TONKS

The Chair: We have one more presenter before we break, the chairman, Alan Tonks, of the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. Chairman Tonks, would you come forward, please.

Mr Sergio: Since he agrees to this proposal about not hearing the opposing side, can we dispose of hearing him?

Mr Gilchrist: I hope that's on the record. Mr Sergio has suggested that we don't listen to anybody in favour of the bill. We want to hear what you have to say even the Liberals don't.

Mr Sergio: You're so full of nonsense.

The Chair: Order, please. Thank you, Chairman Tonks, for coming to appear before the committee today.

Mr Alan Tonks: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. I've anticipated being in the House twice. Only during these hearings and from sitting here listening to the cut and thrust of your decisions do I come to the conclusion of the difference between a parliamentary system and how cities operate. In your parliamentary approach you're attempting, through the cut and thrust of your partisan relationships, to focus on the truth of what makes for a really great city, and I applaud you in attempting to do that.

Please don't get what I'm saying wrong, but cities, from my experience, are so grass-roots that cut and thrust of partisanship sometimes takes on a different spirit. I

have chosen to be part of that spirit, and I'd like to try to show you a little insight into that in my discussion today.

I support the concept of a united city. It's in a better position than a fragmented city to meet the global economic challenges and to position the core of the greater Toronto region. It offers the best hope to maintain the culture of civility of this community. Communities are made great by people, not necessarily by politicians, and sometimes we forget that.

We share the same challenges for the future and we should be united in dealing with them. To surmount these challenges we need a united city, a unified city. It will be less top-heavy, less bureaucratic and more efficient. Amalgamation doesn't mean bigger government; it means leaner government. Amalgamation won't just make our government more efficient to run; it will make it easier to understand. People will know who to turn to when they need help and they will know who to hold accountable when they are unable to get it.

My vision of the united city is one of a sustainable, diverse urban community that is economically vital, environmentally healthy and socially strong; a city where challenges of growth and change are met in an integrated and balanced way, where economic competitiveness and civility are not mutually exclusive, where people help each other and the community's interest is paramount.

This requires partnerships with the federal and provincial governments, the community, public agencies and private organizations. This requires that the united city has the legislative and financial capacity to thrive, a sound financial platform. Without this the city will be doomed before it is even created. The impact would be decline in our neighbourhoods, accompanied by a flight of businesses, jobs and people, weakening our tax base and hollowing our core. Cities create wealth. Wealthy cities lead to wealthy suburbs, and competitive cities are critical to a competitive province.

Today I'm going to try to disentangle two very separate issues: one, which is the focus of these hearings, is the question of what kind of political structure Metropolitan Toronto needs; the other is which level of government, provincial or municipal, should pay for which services. While separate issues, decisions regarding who should pay for what have the potential to either capture the opportunities afforded by a united city or make the political structure irrelevant. Without a strong financial foundation, no format of municipal government could maintain our quality of life and continue to address the needs of our citizens.

Just remember that while about 50% of the GTA population lives in Metro, 72% of the people living in the GTA who are over 65 years old live in Metro, 66% of all GTA households earning less than \$20,000 a year live in Metro and 89,000 children under 10 years old live in poverty and live here in Metro. I have said that is a city of poor children greater than the population of a very large city to the north of us, Barrie.

One can agree with the provincial government's proposed structure for municipal government, as I do, while strongly disagreeing with its proposed funding formula, as I do.

Before I turn to Bill 103 I must address the down-loading issue just very briefly.

The public embraces the need for change and knows the time is now. What the public fears is the unknown financial impacts on their property and business taxes. At the present time we're playing a game which, on the roll of the dice, threatens to place them and their families in harm's way. People are worried.

Just consider the options the united city would face to try to make up a \$379-million gap, and I realize there are figures that indicate it's even greater than that. The board of trade estimates it would require a \$350 annual property tax increase for the average Metro homeowner and a \$7,900 annual increase for the average commercial business, and it could get worse. Promised contingency funds will not get us out of this fiscal straitjacket that the downloading will tie us in. We must find an option to produce a revenue-neutral solution. We must protect the taxpaying citizens of the new Toronto: our renters, our homeowners, our businesses, our industry, our future.

Now I'd like to focus on Bill 103. I am critical of the process for amalgamation envisaged by Bill 103. The legislation as drafted requires substantive revision in a number of areas. While a detailed submission will be forthcoming from Metro council, let me outline the key issues as they concern the board of trustees, the transition team and neighbourhood committees.

First I want to talk about the board of trustees, section 9 to section 15. The board of trustees violates the basic democratic principle that a municipal government must be in a position to be accountable to its electors. How can it be accountable if it can't make decisions in what it judges to be the best interests of its electors? The board of trustees severely restricts the ability of the elected representatives of Metro Toronto's residents to govern. It seems based on the presumption that the existing councils can't be trusted, and as an elected public official and servant and on behalf of my colleagues, might I say that notion offends me.

My recommendation to you is to scrap sections 9 to 15 entirely and not to have a board of trustees at all. There are sufficient checks and balances in the legislative and regulatory relationship between the province and municipalities now to permit the existing councils to get on with the job of carrying out the mandates vested in them by their electors. Bill 103 should simply emphasize that the existing councils will continue to be guided by the principles of financial best practices and due diligence.

If you don't eliminate the board of trustees, then at the very least limit the extent to which they intrude on the daily business of the elected councils. Micromanagement by the board of trustees is inappropriate. For example, the list of what old councils should not do, clauses 10(1)(b) to (g), should be replaced with a clause that indicates that once a council's 1997 budget is approved by the board of trustees, only financial matters not contemplated in that budget and/or matters not consistent with the contracts and collective agreements need further approval from the board of trustees.

Second, the transition team, which is sections 16 through 21, needs to be rethought. The transition team also violates the accountability principle. The actions of the transition team will place unreasonable and unnecessary restrictions on the ability of the duly elected new

council to make important decisions about how it carries on its business, whom it employs and even how much it's allowed to raise or spend. If at the outset the new council can't be trusted to make these kinds of decisions, why create it in the first place?

Sections 16 through 21 must be changed to limit the scope of the transition team to ensuring that the bare minimum structure is in place to allow the new council to begin functioning. This means that you must scope the mandate of the transition team to developing a plan for the consolidation of general government functions which the new city council can then implement quickly, and to researching the most effective tools for citizen involvement. When it is in office, the new council can make the necessary decisions about the organization of the new municipality and its approach to doing business.

Bill 103 should provide for an interim period at the start of the new council's mandate during which all municipal department heads report to the new council until such time as fair hiring processes have been successfully completed. The transition team may be mandated the responsibility for hiring a new solicitor, clerk, treasurer and auditor in preparation for the consolidation of general government functions, which should be the first priority of the new council. Transition from the fragmented to a unified city in the areas of general administration and management shouldn't, and needn't, miss a beat. It must be the new council that undertakes consolidation of newly acquired service functions. How could it be otherwise? Metro's experience is that service delivery must be equally distributed across the whole area, based on sound research and on individual community needs.

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I recommend, then, that a more effective approach would be for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to appoint a special benchmarking committee to monitor the consolidation and progress of the new city council and report its findings annually through the Provincial Auditor's report.

Third, the idea of establishing neighbourhood committees — section 5 and clause 16(4)(e) — is not thoroughly thought out. On the one hand, the united city must ensure that opportunities for higher citizenship are unparalleled; that it supports strong communities with equitable access to opportunities, resources and services; and that it fosters a sense of pride, identity and shared responsibility among people who live and work in the city. On the other hand, however, I don't believe that simply requiring the new city to enact a bylaw creating neighbourhood committees will achieve this. Surely it is council that needs to work with and listen to the community about what matters to them. Citizens must be more directly brought into this process of change before we enshrine it in any type of model through legislation.

Why ignore the process for city planning which already exists? Bill 103, subsection 2(2), does not require the new city to have an official plan. This surely must be an oversight. The most effective way to get neighbourhood involvement would be to develop an official plan for the new city. The constituents I have talked to want a voice on a broad range of issues, interrelated issues

concerning planning for the entire city: the environment, social policy, economic development, cultural expression. Revision to subsection 2(2) giving the new city all the powers and duties of Metropolitan Toronto is critical to community access. In this way, the new city would be required to prepare and maintain an official plan, and with it the public process for planning the new city. Out of this process will emerge ideas for structures that will provide for real and continuing citizen participation, which, at the planning level, will be unparalleled in the history of this city.

I cannot emphasize how important it is that in this area of citizen consultations, we get it right: balancing our local planning concerns that affect neighbourhoods and the large social, environmental and economic issues that underpin the future sustainability of this city. It is not beyond the capacity of this city to achieve this objective, and in order to do so, it must not be rushed.

This debate should not be trivialized to focus on pro- or anti-megacity. It is not about the institutions of government; it is about people who share a quality of life. What has given us that quality of life are our values, beliefs and attitudes and the political culture of sharing and caring. I simply cannot believe these will disappear with the elimination of some internal borders, a half-dozen city halls and a few thousand bylaws. Anyone who seriously believes that vastly underestimates the people of this city.

That is not to say that these cultural values cannot be undermined. Indeed they can. I believe Toronto must be a united city, but it can be slowly and irreversibly destroyed by the erosion of our ability to pay for services that keep our city safe, clean, socially peaceful and neighbourly. Disentanglement must result in a solution that is revenue-neutral for this community. The future citizens of the unified city will be the ones who will be the beneficiaries or the victims of that. Fix the foundation that is at risk — that is, the financial foundation — and together we will tackle the future.

The people who built this city were visionaries, people who had a dream of how the interests of the community interrelated, and their achievement is a city that works. This is the Metro story. Now it remains for us, the beneficiaries, to write the next new, exciting chapter in the history of this city, a unified city built on strong neighbourhoods and harnessing its enormous potential through new structures of citizen involvement.

I'd be pleased to answer any questions.

The Chair: We have about three and a half minutes per caucus for questions, starting with the opposition.

Mr Colle: As you know, your commissioner said on Friday that this mega-dumping on to the new proposed city is going to cost Metro another \$530 million. The average taxpayer picks up about \$400 per home. I think you've stated very clearly that the new city can't work if it starts in this hole.

I commend you for really elucidating the fact that the city doesn't work only as a government plan on paper, because you know the reality of dealing with the homeless, the aged and the children in Metro.

I want to get your comments. A couple of weeks ago, when told of Metro's concern about this lack of consulta-

tion on this tax gap for Metro, the minister's comment was: "Well, these cuts are nothing. What's another \$378 million? There have been cuts since Christ was a cowboy." That was how he demeaned the task that's before anybody who's going to govern the new city.

Could you put that on the record in terms of the reality of trying to meet a \$500-million gap and providing for a city that works in neighbourhoods and a city that works in hospitals and a city that works for the children; that it's not just some easy thing that anybody can do and trivialize it as something that's been done forever, without even any consideration? Could you put into perspective what it has meant to you over the last four or five years at Metro?

Mr Tonks: First of all, I would suggest that if we could advance the timetable a couple of years, I don't think any provincial government would try to foist that on a united city with strong representation that would very vociferously oppose that kind of thing.

The additional impact beyond that which was announced, the \$379-million impact, is with respect to long-term care and the drug assistance portions of those programs.

To answer the question, I may be an idealist — I've been accused of a number of things, but if it is an idealist, I certainly wouldn't shirk away from that characterization — but I always believe that people of goodwill and good faith who recognize that there's going to be harm inflicted on anyone are prepared to step back and readdress the approaches they're taking.

I'll give you an example of how that most recently was done, and this is a fair statement, that Metropolitan Toronto, as of March, would have to get rid of 3,500 day care spaces. Last year we said to this government, "If that happens, it's going to be devastating to your workfare programs and so on." The community and social services minister announced on Friday — and I thanked her — that the province listened to Metro and has found a better way of protecting those day care spaces.

All I'm saying to all the members is, help us to find ways to recognize that, should the impact be devastating and take us all away from what we want for this city, let's reappraise it and let's find new solutions. The idealism part of that, to Mr Colle, is that I believe that if there's a will, there are ways that will be found. I'm certainly going to find those ways, and I think part of this process will be a step in that direction.

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Mr Silipo: Mr Tonks, thank you for the presentation. I appreciate on the one hand your very clearly making the link between what the government is doing under Bill 103 and the downloading of costs on to the property tax base, and there are many other pieces in your presentation that, if we had time, I'd like to get into. But I have to tell you, sir, as a member of the provincial Legislature who represents part of Metropolitan Toronto, I am troubled and, I have to tell you, I take great offence at seeing the chair of the Metropolitan Toronto council appear in front of this committee, speak for 20 minutes, and not once mention the official position of the Metropolitan Toronto council on amalgamation.

As you know better than I, sir, that position, as I understand it, is that the Metropolitan Toronto level

should be abolished and that we should move to a GTA level of governance. Why have you not, in 20 minutes of presentation, even touched upon the official position of your council?

Mr Tonks: The difference between the parliamentary system and that to which the member is referring, the local system, is that the members of the Metropolitan council give their chairman quite a bit of latitude because they recognize that he also represents a smaller part of the constituency. I have represented a personal view with respect to my position on the unified city. Members of my council may call me to account for that and I will remain subject to that, but at no time has any member of my council said or suggested that I shouldn't have the opportunity to verbally represent that case I have.

Second, with respect to the second part of the point, on the elimination of Metro government, Metropolitan council has not taken a position with respect to that issue. I have indicated that I would like another opportunity to appear before the committee because there is a draft paper before the council that will be subsequently approved, towards the end of February. I have asked for another opportunity to appear before the committee and to present Metropolitan council's view.

Mr Silipo: I'll be happy to go back and re-read what I thought was the position of Metro council on this.

Chair Tonks, I don't have any trouble at all with you and the other mayors who appear before us giving their personal views on this; I'm not at all objecting to that. But I would think that if we scheduled you and the other mayors for 30 minutes, you would at least have the decency to tell us what your official council position is.

Mr Tonks: Mr Chairman, I take great exception to the word "decency." It's a value-loaded term that may be applicable —

Mr Silipo: It's intended to be.

Mr Tonks: — in the confines of the questioner, but it's not mine.

Mr Silipo: Do your job. Come on.

Mr Tonks: The people will be the judge of that, Mr Silipo, just as they'll be your judge.

Mr Silipo: Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you, Chairman Tonks. We now move to the government caucus time, starting with Minister Leach, followed by Mr Hastings.

Hon Mr Leach: A very good presentation, Mr Tonks. There are a couple of concerns you have that I would like to address. First, you were concerned about the trustees overseeing the budget. Once the budget of the various municipalities is set, as long as they stay within that budget, there's no need to return to the trustees for anything. If they establish a budget and stay within it, they'll never see the trustees. I think the trustees have asked for a monthly report just to show they have stayed within it. I think that concern might be alleviated.

The transition team is making recommendations to the new council. What we want them to have an opportunity to do, of course, is to select some of the senior staff so that when the new council is elected, they can come in and start to work right away. If the new council determines that the staff that were selected aren't appropriate, it will be within their power to reverse those decisions. Once they're elected, they have the job to do that.

I understand that you concur with a single united city but you have some concerns with the process. You would probably agree that the transition team, for example, could develop that process, working with the existing municipalities.

The other thing I just wanted to make sure you're aware of is that Bill 103 is creating a foundation for change. A second piece of legislation will be brought in shortly which will get into the details, for example, of creating an official plan. All those details will be dealt with in that second piece of legislation. What we're dealing with now is just the foundation for change and giving us an opportunity to get on with it.

I hope those comments will alleviate some of the concerns. We look forward to working with the five cities, the borough and Metropolitan Toronto in ensuring that this single city can be put in place in a very effective manner.

The Chair: If you would care to respond, you may, Chairman Tonks.

Mr Tonks: I guess the problem I have is that the transition team appears to be focused in a manner that it's actually going to provide the solutions, if you will, to real citizen participation through real structure. My position is that if you dream that's possible in the time frame, then we're dreaming in Technicolor.

Hon Mr Leach: That's a job for the new council. There isn't any doubt about that.

Mr Tonks: Yes, if the transition team is going to research some models and provide those as points of departure for the council, I think that's right.

What the people are really concerned about, whether they're people involved in any aspect of life in the city — business, the arts, the social parts of the city — as I've indicated before, we shouldn't miss a blink, that the continuing service delivery system works while the new format of governance is being implemented by the new structure.

The Chair: Thank you, Chairman Tonks, for coming forward to make your presentation today. Unfortunately, Mr Hastings, that conversation exhausted the government caucus time. This committee will recess until 3:30 this afternoon.

The committee recessed from 1216 to 1530.

JANE JACOBS

The Chair: This afternoon's first deputant is Jane Jacobs. Please come forward. Ms Jacobs, you have 10 minutes this afternoon to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit. If you leave some time at the end of your presentation, it will start off with the opposition caucus asking you some questions on your presentation, if you decide you would like to entertain them. You may begin at any time.

Ms Jane Jacobs: I'm within the 10 minutes, or almost 10.

I oppose amalgamation of Toronto, North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough, York and East York for many of the same reasons others oppose it but will use my 10 minutes to emphasize that cities do not thrive from central planning, including megacity planning. A city of social and economic vitality contains and nourishes

details and differences in mind-boggling quantities. Respect for details and differences is of the essence.

For instance, a small town can be economically pretty much all of a piece, that is, flourishing or declining as a unit. But in a city some places are apt to be in social or economic trouble at the very same time other parts are prospering or maintaining an even keel. Thus, a city's government ought to be flexible enough to respond to radically different needs and opportunities at the same given time.

For example, last year, at the initiative of the mayor and council, the city of Toronto introduced a new planning philosophy into two small specific downtown areas in serious trouble. Not incidentally, the change was made with patient and complete democratic procedures and safeguards. Megacity bureaucracies do not employ this sort of pinpointed awareness and responsiveness. They can't, because their jurisdictions are too big and complex.

I would judge that the city of Toronto is probably close to the limit at which true flexible responsiveness of the kind mentioned is feasible. Appointed neighbourhood citizens' bodies, like New York City's community planning boards, are not remedies for the shortcomings of megacities. I served on one of those community boards in New York for many years, and I assure you, though we tried hard and though our board was one of the more conscientious and fair, the system was a flop compared with the human-scale elected local governments we are lucky enough to have.

All bureaucracies make mistakes, but megacity bureaucracies tend to make big, big mistakes, like the elevated Gardiner Expressway, for example. What is worse, they tend thereafter to be paralysed with respect to correcting their mistakes or learning from them. For instance, when the city of Toronto was granted autonomous control over its social housing under Mayor Crombie about 25 years ago, it promptly switched away from housing projects in favour of socially and economically superior infill housing and also created the St Lawrence neighbourhood, deliberately modelling it on city strengths rather than project weaknesses. Contrast this with the brain-dead and otherwise notorious record to this day of the Metro housing authority, the third-largest landlord in North America.

Apparently the Ontario government wants to amalgamate our city governments for the purpose of cutting out confusions and duplications, improving services and reducing waste. Good aims. But depend upon it, in real life the side-effects of amalgamation would contradict those aims. It defies common sense to afflict the businesses and residents of six cities with government that will be less responsive than what they have now, more prone to costly error because less on top of detailed realities, more inert, and very likely more vulnerable to favouritism and hidden agendas at the expense of taxpayers and the public treasury.

We all recognize, I think, that these are times of rapid change when we need to welcome innovative better ways of doing things. Many traditionally monopolistic public services need to be opened up to entrepreneurs and others with good ideas; also, with good jobs if their initiatives pan out. Great ranges of activities from transportation and sewage treatment to recycling services, products and

technology invite innovative development. But governments can, and too often do, discourage experimenting and prevent or delay privately undertaken initiatives that trespass into their traditional preserves. All central planning is at odds with multiple and diverse experimenting. To be sure, small bureaucracies, small governments can be as brain-dead as big ones, but at least, if they are multiple, when one says no or just doesn't get it, the old saying applies: not all the eggs are in that basket.

Whatever Metro's virtues were at the start, it now behaves like a dysfunctional family. Its members are suspicious of one another. They gang up on each other. The wrangles concern activities that are already amalgamated. The few Metro coordinating services really necessary and really conducted amiably are now geographically irrelevant. Anyone who supposes harmony will prevail and efficiency reign after whole-hog amalgamation has taken leave of common sense. These six cities really are different and the differences won't be erased by dint of everybody trying to mind everybody else's business and beat down every local vision different from their own.

The Golden report had it right: strengthen the local city governments by doing away with Metro. Coordinate fewer and more carefully selected responsibilities at scales which are actually rational for their functions.

The ugly conflicts in Metro over methods of property taxation arise ultimately because over the years large and inappropriate burdens have been piled upon property taxes, the only way Ontario cities have of levying taxes. Property taxes hit poor renters and struggling businesses disproportionately heavily compared with their means. That's why welfare costs in property tax bills are unjust as well as impractical. The same applies to support of public schools, essentially another type of social transfer payment. Both belong on income tax. Provincial governments, no matter whether Conservative, Liberal or New Democratic, have one and all been frightened of biting that bullet. But the injustices and makeshifts of the property tax mess are now already intractable. To place still further inappropriate burdens on that tax will make what is now intractable intolerable, no matter how the take is pooled.

There are ways out of relationships if and when they become intolerably destructive. One possible escape could be to create a new province, South Ontario. In that event, South Ontario and North Ontario could each set its own preferred tax and other provincial policies. North Ontario, of course, would still depend heavily on subsidies from South Ontario's economy but only indirectly through Ottawa, much as if North Ontario were an Atlantic province.

However, it would be much, much more sensible to avoid an intolerable future leading to deterioration and disruption by intelligently and courageously facing realities in the fine province of Ontario that we do have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Jacobs. You've used your time very effectively right up to only 10 seconds remaining so there will no time available for questions from either caucus. I want to thank you for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

Ms Jacobs: You're welcome. Thank you for listening.

1540

JEANNINE LOCKE

The Chair: Would Jeannine Locke please come forward. Welcome to the committee this afternoon. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit. Any remaining time will be allotted to the opposition party for questions.

Ms Jeannine Locke: It's fairly formidable to follow Jane Jacobs. Members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, I have no idea how, among the hundreds of petitioners, I happen to be here, but I am grateful for the opportunity to speak.

For your information, I've lived in five cities during my long adulthood: Saskatoon was the home from whence I set out to make my fame and fortune. Ottawa, London, England and New York City were stops on the way to Toronto where, 30 years ago, I elected to settle in, to become a citizen, not merely a consumer of the riches accessible to me here.

I feel favoured to have been present during Toronto's evolution into the cosmopolitan city that was recently celebrated by *Fortune* magazine. Northrop Frye, speaking of his city, in his very last public speech before he died, saw Toronto's real glory, "in the tolerated variety of the people in its streets." In other words, this is a great place to live. Toronto works the way it is, with its 16 wards of manageable size.

I'll give you an example from my own personal experience of just how democratically it does work. In 1969, I was living where I still live, on Belmont Street, in a row of small houses that were built when Yorkville was a village. Behind our row is Ramsden Park, lovely and lively in all seasons. Our only midtown park, it has playing fields that accommodate all ages. No one nowadays would dream of disturbing its busy useful life. But back in 1969, Toronto was still infatuated with bigness. We gloried in our high-rising buildings and our Gardiner Expressway.

It happened that Ramsden was threatened by a land swap that would have allowed Greenwin development to build on city property immediately adjoining the park. Two looming apartment towers, with their attendant heavy traffic, would have radically changed the character of the park. Three women, neighbours, myself and two other freelance journalists, decided to resist progress in aid of our park. We would take on city hall.

Along with steady attendance at committee meetings, where we were treated playfully at first, we contacted ratepayer groups across the city and made the rounds of newsrooms and editorial boards. Within six weeks, we had crowds behind us. There was a community out there. In June 1969, a monster rally in Ramsden brought together, for the first time, all the ratepayers groups in the 16 wards. CHUM, a good neighbour, supplied a sound system, music and stage. We made a great racket that day in the park. City hall got the message. Ramsden was saved, and it all started with only three women with resources only of energy, endurance and the attractions of a good cause.

In the same year, two women, according to Saturday's *Globe and Mail*, were responsible for initiating the

campaign that stopped the Spadina Expressway. Surely that is democracy at its most economical and efficacious.

Now, 28 years later, it might seem that nothing has changed. Aroused citizens are meeting again across not only Toronto but the whole Metro area in schools, auditoriums, theatres, churches and kitchens to campaign against Bill 103. But the circumstances tragically could not be more different. We're dealing now with a majority provincial government that doesn't listen and has declared that it won't listen, not only to its citizens who are opposed to being swallowed up and regurgitated into a single megacity, but even to all those respectable people in groups with certified expertise who are as baffled as the rest of us.

Instead of public debate, the government assaults us with a blitz of propaganda, a province-wide letter implying that the bill was passed. It was later censured by the Speaker of the Legislature. Then there's the omnipresent TV advertising campaign, and finally hundreds of thousands of anonymous faxes in aid of the government's programs. The fax machines are probably whirring in this building as we speak: all of this not to inform us but to keep us innocent of the information that we need. Instead of building community in order to confront the real problems in this province, our government is turning us against each other: 905 versus 416. What a puzzlement this must be to newcomers.

Why the unseemly haste? We have muddled along for 200 years and suddenly in a single week our government presents us with such massive change and attendant chaos that it is literally breathtaking. It's also, according to John Ralston Saul, "The classic corporate takeover strategy: By changing everything at once, you create confusion among the enemy." The enemy being us. That's the shattering idea.

I'll try to end my allotted time with ideas that are more inspirational. Here I'm quoting again from Northrop Frye's last public speech, its very last paragraph:

"Society must be loyal, but in a democracy there are no uncritical loyalties. There must always be a tension of loyalties, not in the sense of opposed forces pulling apart but in the sense of one feeling of belonging attached to and complemented by another, which is very often the relating of a smaller ethnical community to a larger one."

It is through some such process as this, Dr Frye believed, that the development of Canada must make its way.

Finally, I heard on the news yesterday of a monument being unveiled in Ottawa in honour of Tommy Douglas, the pioneer of medicare. The inscription on the monument is a message from Tommy that I'll leave with your committee: "Courage, my friends. It's not too late to make a better world." Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. There are two minutes remaining for questions coming from the opposition caucus.

Mr Colle: Thank you very much, Mrs Locke, for coming. I think the question I have for you is, why are you so afraid of this megacity bill? I know the minister has said here it's just politicians afraid of losing their jobs. He said it's just the left-wing radicals. Why are you concerned about this megacity as a citizen of Toronto?

Ms Locke: I think it's because in the time that I've lived not only here but in a variety of places one sees mistakes being made. It's very hard at my age to believe in the infallibility of almost anyone, let alone politicians, and I think there is that wonderful tension of loyalties when you get a manageable size, as I tried to illustrate with the Ramsden experience.

It would never have occurred to me, for example, to take this to a huge, city-wide council because I don't think my little park would have meant very much in those circumstances. But I lived in that neighbourhood of that park and I knew what would happen to that park. The city hall councillors had made that decision, thinking: "Aha, a wonderful increase to our tax base in this neighbourhood. Two 27-storey shining towers. How economical. How wonderful." Joe Piccininni in fact did say to me one day as to a sort of patient retarded child that he couldn't understand why I would prefer this sort of general untidiness of my background when I could have these two beautiful towers that I could be nesting at the foot of. So I just —

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Locke.

Ms Locke: Accessibility is my —

The Chair: I apologize for interrupting. You've come to the end of your 10 minutes. I want to thank you for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

1550

MIRIAM KAUFMAN

The Chair: Could Miriam Kaufman please come forward. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Dr Miriam Kaufman: I'm Dr Miriam Kaufman. I'm a paediatrician who has been practising in downtown Toronto since the middle of 1982 and I live in the city of York, although my mail never seems to come to city of York. It always says "Toronto" and gets to me anyway.

I don't think it's surprising that the last two speakers and I have all lived in the United States. I don't think this is just because when you live in the United States, you turn into a rabble-rouser. I think it's because we have all seen megacities in one way or another in our personal experience and have been pleased to have avoided living in one of them since we have moved to this country or come back to this country as in my case.

I was talking to my parents last night in Georgia and my father said, "I think there's a generation gap here." He said: "We went to the big cities a generation ago and now know they're a mistake. You guys haven't figured that out yet and you're going to make the same mistake again." I think that's what we would like to prevent happening.

Unlike many people who are here today, although I don't think gigantic is great, I also don't think tiny is always terrific and I do in fact favour some amalgamation. As I said, I live in the city of York and I would like the city of York to be amalgamated with Toronto or North York or Etobicoke, whatever geographically made sense.

However, I would like that because I think it would help us in our building of a community. We have diffi-

culties with York being so small with giant Toronto, in my case three doors down the street, in sometimes building a community that makes sense to us geographically. To me, community building is very important, but communities are not built by governments making decisions about who's going to be part of what megacity or what smaller city. Communities are built by the people who live in them.

Many of us who live in the communities in Toronto have this feeling with this proposed legislation that somehow or other we're being punished for our misdeeds. We don't know what those misdeeds are, but we must have done something wrong to have this imposed upon us rather than being able to build our own communities. I think it's important for the health of our communities for them not just to be cities but to be communities in the best sense of the word and I think we need to be able to do that.

I think the introduction of this legislation is good because it has lit a fire under some of the politicians within the different cities in Metro to look at amalgamating in smaller ways, to look at making things more efficient. In my own city, our city council voted to approach the city of Toronto about amalgamating those two cities. I think that's the usefulness of this legislation, that it has forced people to think. I would like it to stop at that point and to let us move along with building our own communities, with making things more efficient, without this kind of top-down thing.

I'm going to be quick, because I know there are many people here today who have a lot more to say than I do, but I just wanted to say one other thing. When I started thinking about the whole megacity idea, I started thinking about how some of my friends reacted when the Price Club, or actually its predecessor, opened in Toronto. People thought it was really great and definitely thought bigger was better and rushed off to the Price Club and came home with 20-pound bags of popcorn and gigantic things of corn flakes. They were proselytizing about the Price Club and how I really should go to the Price Club and buy these huge things that would save me a lot of money.

They stopped doing that after a couple of months, and I thought to ask about it. They said: "You know, it seemed like we were saving a lot of money, but when we actually got there — we've been throwing away a lot of stuff. The kids will not eat corn flakes every morning for six weeks." Then you throw it into the compost and it turns into cement and that's a whole other problem. It's very difficult to go through 20 pounds of popcorn in the time it stays fresh. All of a sudden, those people are saying: "Maybe bigger is not actually better. Maybe I should go back to my local grocery store and be buying things in more reasonably sized packages."

Those people don't stay away from the Price Club altogether. When they have a big purchase to make, they go there. I would say that the analogy to that is something like police services, which I think make sense to have Metro-wide. We should be able to go to the government price club when we need it but we shouldn't be forced to do all of our shopping there. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Kaufman. We have about four and half minutes left. If you'd like, you could stay and entertain some questions from the third party.

Mr Silipo: Ms Kaufman, I appreciate the point you're making that some change is not only necessary but is desirable. In fact, one of the problems we see with this legislation is that it doesn't give the opportunity for that kind of discussion that you want and, I suspect, many others want to try to come up with what the alternatives might be. The government clearly has made up its mind, it seems, and so far is saying it won't be budged from that. I just wondered if you could expound a little more on that point of what we would need to do to give people in Metropolitan Toronto the kind of time that still would result in some changes happening, so it wouldn't be seen as a way to just say, "No, we don't want to do anything," but at the same time really engage people in a serious discussion that would lead to some consensus perhaps emerging around what changes we should make.

Dr Kaufman: Well, I'm not a politician, I'm not a lawyer or anything like that.

Mr Silipo: That may be of benefit in this case.

Dr Kaufman: What I would like to see is some kind of legislation that would insist on the cities coming up with a business plan that looks at efficiencies, that looks seriously at getting together with the other cities around things that should be amalgamated, but also finding some way to encourage cities to undergo mini-amalgamations. I would love to see three or four municipalities a year or two from now.

As a physician, I've been trained to look at the evidence. This is our buzzword these days: "evidence-based medicine." We really like to look at what the evidence is. I started looking around for evidence that megacities will save money or do things more efficiently. I haven't been able to find that. Now, I'm not adept at the city planning literature, and maybe I've missed that. But I would like somebody, some committee or something, to look at what is the real evidence, not that people think it's a good idea, but what's the evidence that where it's been tried it actually works?

Ms Lankin: I appreciate your presentation. I was struck by your comment that you feel like we must have done something wrong here in Metro; we're being punished for something. In a way, that's the thing I can't understand about all of this. Take a look at how the government is proceeding in areas like Hamilton-Wentworth, where there has been a process and its citizens' forum that's been involved in advising the politicians; the way they're setting out a process for Ottawa-Carleton to continue on the road of looking at their changes; and how they're just beginning discussions with the 905 area, and they say it's going to take some time.

1600

It seems like other parts of the province are being treated differently and are recognizing a sense of process. The government says there's been lots of studies, but none has been with real citizen involvement and none has recommended this option. How do you respond when you see different processes in different parts of the province?

Dr Kaufman: I feel resentful. I have to say it never occurred to me to feel any animosity towards people who lived in one area code over another before all of this. But I was reading somewhere that after all this happens, the area around Toronto will have about the same population as in the new Toronto, but with 29 governments. Somehow or other, it seems to me that they need less but that we maybe need more than one. There is this feeling of somehow or other we must have done something wrong to be treated in this fashion, which people in other parts of the province don't seem to be being treated in.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr Kaufman, for your presentation today. I'm not sure the folks at Kellogg's appreciated some of it, but the rest of us do appreciate you coming forward and making your presentation to the committee.

KYLE RAE

The Chair: Would Kyle Rae please come forward? Good afternoon, Mr Rae.

Mr Kyle Rae: Thank you. I first of all would like to thank Isabel Bassett for being here. You're my MPP and I think it's very important that you hear what people have to say about this issue. I'm really gratified to know that you're taking the time to be here. It's unfortunate that the minister who has introduced this has left. I will soon be his constituent; I'm moving in April. I remember during the last election at the 519 Church Street Community Centre all-candidates meeting, he repeatedly used the term, "I won't blow smoke at ya." Well, if there ain't smoke been blown at us, I don't what is. It's just incredible what's been blown by that minister at the city of Toronto and other municipalities in Metro.

I have spoken to many committees over the years. I've gone up to Ottawa and I've been here in the previous government and this government; Bill 26, for example, and rent control. I have never had a harder time trying to figure out what to say to a government about an issue because they made it so patently clear at the very beginning that they don't want to listen. I have never experienced that in my life and I am ashamed to say that I am experiencing that in Ontario. I think you hear that from the people who have spoken to you today. I've heard it just from the two previous speakers this afternoon.

I can't believe that a government is only interested in what it believes in and is not interested in the facts. That's what I've been hearing time and time again. I had the opportunity to read Minister Leach's speech earlier today, and it's full of beliefs, not about facts. It's what he wants to achieve. It's about an ideology. It's not about, how do you fix local government?

I can't believe the degree of hostility. First of all, there was a request to await a referendum. We were told no, and then they decide yes. Then you continue to refuse to allow a referendum steer you or guide you. I find that preconceived notion of how to deal with this matter appalling in politicians. We don't do that at the city. I don't think even Metro, on its worst day, does that. I'm surprised that you do that.

On page 3 of the minister's comments, he said: "People worry that local government will be less access-

ible to the average citizen. But we believe the opposite will be true. Local government will be more accessible." Earlier this month we had a visit from Wendell Cox, who's a very established, informed consultant in the States. He wrote a report, *Local and Regional Governance in the Greater Toronto Area: A Review of Alternatives*. What did he find? He found that in the major municipalities in the States where there had been amalgamation, there are thriving actions by citizens' groups to reverse it. There are communities in LA that are wanting to leave. In New York City, Staten Island is wanting to leave that amalgamation. In Chicago, as he said, people did not decide to hive off their neighbourhood; they left, they walked out, they moved to the suburbs, they got out of town. I'm afraid the recipe you have on the table is going to give us that same damaged city you've got in the States.

He also talks about escalating costs. On page 2 he said, "We propose leaving behind the overlap and duplication, the escalating costs, confused priorities and conflicting mandates...." I have yet to find any evidence that we have escalating costs. I have been the chair of the personnel committee of the city of Toronto since 1991, and since that time I've chaired the streamlining committee, which has reduced the budget by \$85 million without raising taxes. We have not raised taxes since 1992, and we have maintained our levels of service. Through attrition, we had no layoffs, and we've reduced the staffing levels from 8,500 to 7,000. By 2001, we will be free of any debenture costs.

We have reduced the senior management level from 85 managers to 41 managers and we've collapsed the management levels from seven to four. We are keepers of our own house, we are fixing our own problems, and I resent the city of Toronto and the municipalities of Metro having to carry the burden of your tax problems. This is a downsizing exercise to alleviate your problem.

We are not in the financial mess that Miami City finds itself in. That state is now thinking of merging it with Dade county. Miami is bankrupt and they're going to fix that bankruptcy by merging it with Dade county. That is what you're trying to do to the city of Toronto. Fortunately in Dade county, they're going to have a referendum. They're going to ask the people if they want it. They're not going to force it on them.

Contrary to the minister's comments, we are efficient. We are not subject to escalating costs. We know that over the years Metro Council has increased its taxes far more regularly and at far higher rates than we ever have. Between 1984 and 1994 the residential tax rate was increased by 73.1%. The city of Toronto's draw on that residential tax rate was 37.7%. Metro Toronto's draw on the residential tax rate was 68.6%, almost twice. We are not the problem. If you look at the information, you'll find that the Metro level of government is the more costly level of government.

This was just handed to me before I came into the meeting by one of our commissioners. They have studied the GTA upper-tier operating budgets per capita. The Metro budget per capita is \$1,294.38, in Durham it's \$700, Peel is \$500, Halton is another \$500, York region is \$468 per capita. Metro level of government is already

the costliest level of government you've got and what you're doing is entrenching it. You're taking away what local communities need, and that is accountability. It's not just accountability about the decisions you make, it's accountability about the money you spend. I would say to you that Metro council has lost that and you're busy trying to shore that up.

When I've dealt with this issue in talking to my constituents, and many of them have phoned my office, they are concerned about their neighbourhoods. I represent inner-city Toronto, right downtown. It is the downtown that the people in the rest of the Metro area come to to see theatre, go to the opera, go to football and hockey games. They consider it their backyard. They don't see it as a neighbourhood; they see it as a destination for work or for play. So there is a constant tug of war between the issues of the suburbs and the downtown played out in my own backyard, in the one I represent.

You have traffic issues. The Spadina Expressway was one that was dealt with several decades ago, but the Leslie Street extension could easily come back on to the agenda if Metro is dominated by the suburban neighbourhoods.

1610

Metro council has never been an apolitical actor in the arts community. Members of that council will go into their budget and say, "We don't like gay and lesbian theatre; we're not going to fund it," because they've got a suburban mentality. They've done that on the floor of council.

Incineration is an issue that the suburbs love and would love to see imposed on Toronto, and city council has a ban on incineration. There's that conflict.

I chair the AIDS committee of the city of Toronto and we give out a million dollars of taxpayers' money each year for AIDS prevention and education, and every year we ask the other municipalities in Metro area to create their own funds for that education and every year they say no. When that fund was first started in 1988, North York's response was, "We don't have AIDS in North York." That's the problem I'm afraid of and that's the concern that my constituents have, that kind of: "It's your problem, not mine. The prostitution and the crack dealers are down there. It's not in North York. It's not in Etobicoke." Those kinds of conflicts will be exacerbated.

I don't think I will see another capital project built in downtown Toronto. If there is a major issue around taxes, am I going to see a library, a school, a new park built in downtown Toronto, or will it be built in Scarborough? We know the answer to that, because for the last 20 years it's been almost impossible to build a school in Toronto. All that capital money gets spent in Etobicoke, in Scarborough, and anyone who knows the education system can tell you that.

We don't need your experiment to tell you what it's like to have a Metro level of government. We've had it since 1988 as a directly elected body and we know that it's in opposition to the beliefs of the people who live in downtown Toronto.

I don't understand why this government has gone in this direction. I don't think it is in the public's interest. I don't think it's been demonstrated. You have not

demonstrated why we should do this. The information that we have received at city, council from Americans who have done their studies in the States to our own work, say that it's not viable.

I take exception to the way in which you talk about consultation or consensus or trying to understand the issue with the neighbourhoods, when in fact you've taken a very hostile approach. You've said, "This is what we're going to do," and you leave us very little room to inform you or negotiate with you.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr Rae. I've already been quite liberal with the time.

Mr Rae: I grew up in this province and I must tell you that I've never seen a government acting in this manner.

The Chair: I appreciate you coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today. Thank you very much.

RINO IANNONE

The Chair: Would Rino Iannone please come forward. Good afternoon, Mr Iannone, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Rino Iannone: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I live in Etobicoke. I am married. I own a small business in the city of Concord. Prior to the last provincial election I was sold on the political platform of the provincial Tories. They stood for common sense. I, like many other citizens, voted to give Mike Harris a mandate to bring to port his Common Sense Revolution. Slowly but surely this province is seeing an extraordinary turnaround and a remarkable number of opportunities being created.

On the other hand, however, I hear ever more often now, "Sorry, we're understaffed; we just cannot serve you as we used to." I sometimes feel that if I were to run my business the way some government offices are run, I would not be in business for a very long time.

At the same I'm cognizant of the layers and layers of bureaucracy that existed and continue to exist in our system, of the duplication of tasks that take place every day, and of the money wasted needlessly. On several occasions I have seen crews of men working the streets of Metro. One person is working, six are just watching. Is this vision indicative of the way that my money is being spent? Am I paying the salary of seven men when only one can do the work?

Common sense tells me that if one person is doing all the work then only one person should be hired. But what about the other six? What would they do? Would they just sit in an office, draw money and nobody even know they exist? Would they join the unemployment line ranks? Is this formula being applied at every level of government? Am I being asked to pay the salary of seven persons when only one is needed to do the job?

This same commonsense formula can be applied to the proposed amalgamation of six cities. It really makes sense that instead of having six mayors, six governments, we have only one mayor and one government that takes the responsibility to deliver what a municipal government should deliver: services that reflect the daily needs of its

citizens, ie, garbage collection etc. Most importantly, we need to continue to have a local government that is close to the grass roots and understands the importance of continuing to be committed to that end.

We now know what we have. As imperfect as our system may appear, we know what to expect from our municipal representatives, but now we want to change that. It is proposed that in the name of common sense we get rid of the six existing municipalities and Metro, and amalgamate them into one. Fine. I would like to know what happens to the other six that are now not needed any more. This is the question: Are we confident that one government can do the work of six or are we creating just another layer of municipal government? Are we creating another Metro just with a different name, just bigger?

Oh yes, let us not forget the proposed referendum in the mix of things here. Let me see now. The question should be very clear, very direct, very honest: "Are you in favour of abolishing your local municipality for a megacity municipality? Yes or no?" It sounds simple enough.

But before I'm asked to answer this question, I welcome the opportunity to understand all the issues at hand. I have no idea what's going on. It only makes good common sense as far as I can see. I want to see a blueprint of what is being proposed. I want to see the mid- to long-term implications of the proposed creation of this so-called megacity. I want to be sure what tomorrow means to me and, more importantly, what I am creating and leaving for my kids. Will we create for them a city that is, just like it is today, one of the best in the world or are we planting the seed for slow but sure destruction and disintegration?

We must be assured that what is being proposed is taking place to fix something because it needs fixing and we must be assured that what is taking place will work better, more efficiently and will be cheaper. Otherwise what is the purpose of all this, really? Can someone please tell me what the purpose of all this is? On the subject of common sense, is the downloading of provincial responsibilities a show of good common sense? I am not sure.

Will we have to pay for every service that is now being paid by for our current tax system on a municipal level or will we see toll booths at every street in our own neighbourhood? Are we paving the road for that kind of scenario?

It seems to me that the government is unloading dead weight on to the municipalities. This is a government that is running away from its responsibilities in a quest to balance its books, as far as we all can see. It's the easy way out. Let someone else pick up the tab. Sure, walk away and let somebody else pick it up.

Let me talk for a moment on the subject of democracy. Let me talk about the three appointed trustees the provincial government has imposed on Metro municipalities to oversee spending for the year 1997. This move may not appear to be democratic at all. As a matter of fact, it appears to laugh in the face of democracy. This appears to be wrong, and it probably is wrong, but you know, it makes good common sense. After all, we wouldn't want

our elected officials to go on a buying or selling spree like drunken sailors, would we? One last hurrah.

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Well, you know what? I like the idea of these three appointed watchdogs. I like the concept of accountability that they bring to our political mix. In fact, I like the concept so much that I would like to see it written in the constitution of every level of government. That's right. Even our provincial government should have three appointed watchdogs elected by the people to oversee its daily spending. You know how the story goes: What is good for the goose — right? Let's see a show of courage from our government and let's have them apply this rationale that they have imposed on the municipalities on themselves.

If now is the right time for municipal reform, well, so be it; let's have it. I, for one, would like to see changes that would hold our megacity government more accountable. We must have more accountability from our government, and this is the time to show real courage, real leadership and real commitment.

Let's find a formula that would, first of all, bring accountability to our mix of municipal affairs. Let the people appoint bureaucrats; top bureaucrats, that is. Every top bureaucrat should be elected by the people. Let's make sure that what happened in the city of Etobicoke just a few moments ago is never repeated. If you make a mistake, you're out. It's as simple as that. It only makes good common sense as far as I'm concerned.

We must not forget that all the elected officials remain to some degree accountable to the people. If we don't like the direction that they have taken us in the course of their elected mandate, we have the chance to rectify the matter by electing new people in the next election. Bureaucrats are currently not accountable to anyone. We must bring accountability in our mix of reforms.

This government must remember that in two years or so it will be accountable for everything that it has done. There's no doubt that the electorate is watching the government's handling of this matter of great importance to our future. Whose agenda is Mike Harris trying to deliver this time? What an opportunity for this government to continue to show that the good, old commonsense approach is still very much alive and well. We are all watching.

By the way, what is the hurry? We waited so long, I cannot understand why we must do things at this speed. Let's see the plan. Let's have the long-term implications of all those changes. I voted for the government that showed the guts to put on paper a clear vision of our province. It was a serious commitment on their part to outline to us what we were to expect. It sure grabbed my attention, but as far as I know, no mandate was ever asked for by this government to bring this revolutionary change in our current municipal structure. I was never aware of this intention, but maybe it is the right direction to take. After all, remember: Six looking, one person doing the work. It makes good common sense to bring about some change.

But as for the Common Sense Revolution booklet, I would welcome the opportunity to see this government that has shown so much leadership in a clear commitment

to common sense come up with what I would call a commonsense "megalution" booklet. I would welcome this government's continued commitment to good common sense.

I would also welcome a series of public debates between Mr Al Leach and the mayors of the existing six municipalities and Metro. Then and only then I will be prepared to answer the question on the referendum ballot and accept or reject the idea of a megacity, and not one moment sooner. This is in the name of common sense.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Iannone. You've effectively used your 10 minutes. I appreciate you coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

ARTHUR LOFSKY

The Chair: Would Arthur Lofsky please come forward. Good afternoon, Mr Lofsky, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Arthur Lofsky: My name is Arthur Lofsky. I was born in the city of Toronto 29 years ago and have been a resident of North York for 25 years. I am a card-carrying member of the Progressive Conservative Oriole riding association. I also love this great city of Toronto.

I'm very saddened to be here today. I'm saddened because the Toronto I have known is about to die. Furthermore, I am also witnessing the death of the tranquil and tolerant Ontario I used to know. I voted for this government and I cannot express my regret in doing so. I despair at how unnecessary and wasteful the machinations of this government are and I am furious that Toronto's being destroyed for the most sinister and cynical reasons.

What is most infuriating to me is how this government is perverting the democratic process. Mike Harris, Al Leach and the powers that be appear to be taking advantage of public ignorance on municipal governance by quickly introducing massive changes without explanation or mandate. They justify it all with a publicly financed propaganda campaign that says the status quo does not work, is inefficient and is captive to vested interests. They explicitly imply that to be against Bill 103 is to be for the status quo, sinister indeed.

Until recently most of us in Metro Toronto probably never understood why we've escaped the urban blight well known in American cities. Why were we so lucky to have healthy neighbourhoods, vibrant city life, with safe streets and responsive government? What do we know that the Americans don't? It turns out that Toronto was the beneficiary of a very successful experiment, two-tiered government: one tier to deal with day-to-day local demands represented by distinct boroughs of manageable and responsive size and one tier to coordinate regional needs and services that required shared resources.

The framework was wildly successful. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Toronto prospered while American cities withered away, but we became victims of our own success. The so-called 905 regions grew around Metro as people migrated to cheaper land with cheaper taxes. Being adjacent to Metro allowed them to enjoy Toronto's

services without having to pay for them. Separated by the artificial boundary of Steeles Avenue, they were subject to a different property tax regime based on outdated provincial standards. For example, regional police forces are subsidized outside Metro and so are many other services that Metro pays for on its own.

It soon became a rational economic decision for businesses and homeowners to locate outside Metro, yet still utilize Metro's services without paying for them. These disparities became very apparent when the recession of 1991 whacked Metro. The tax base erosion began to accelerate, exacerbating further the property tax differential between 905 and 416.

As a lifelong resident of Metro I was very concerned. I am proud of my city and I used to travel in and out of Canada, bragging how wonderful Toronto is. But I began to understand that something had to be done that would put Metro back on a level playing field vis-à-vis the economic regions surrounding Metro. I was younger then and did not fully understand how to do that. I hoped my wiser elders would figure it out, as they had in the past. When the previous government announced the Golden commission to deal with this problem, I was comforted by the fact that the problem had been recognized and would be addressed in the traditional Ontario way, that is, through consultation, discussion and hearings and then more consultation and discussion. That is the way changes of this magnitude and impact should be dealt with, because so much is at stake.

Fast-forward to January 1996 and the release of the Golden report. The Harris government was now in power and appeared, in my opinion, to be on the right track. It took a while to absorb the Golden report. It was big, bold and sweeping in its recommendations. It was thoughtful and scholarly. I personally liked its main recommendation that the GTA should be recognized as an interdependent economic region, with a governing body to coordinate regional services. This made a lot of sense. Indeed it seemed analogous to the steps taken in the 1950s, when Metro was created.

What was significant, however, was another main recommendation recognizing the importance of local government. Instead of amalgamating Metro into one jurisdiction among the GTA body, the Golden commission scoured the literature on the subject and found that large local governments above a certain size do not serve the citizenry very well. Local governments become remote the larger they get, and it follows that they become more expensive to manage as the bureaucracy takes over. Golden and its brain trust recognize this.

I know everyone did not agree with this report in its entirety, particularly the recommendation for a new GTA level. That's fine. These are important changes that affect millions of people. It is natural for people to be concerned. It is also important for interested parties to express themselves, and in so doing, evaluate the effect the changes would have on their lives. Nevertheless it looked like we were going in the right direction.

What I did not count on was a government that has no regard for the citizens of Toronto, and by extension, no regard for the people of Ontario. I did not count on the so-called Progressive Conservatives, once known for

consensus-building, to toss around Toronto as a variable in its fiscal and political calculus. Never did the Tories promise to amalgamate Metro. Indeed they campaigned on the primacy of local government over regional government.

Even if they were sincere in their belief that an amalgamated Toronto would be better, how could they decide to wipe out a governance structure that by all indications serves its citizenry well, and in a matter of months? How could they wipe it out in favour a giant megacity structure despite all recommendations to the contrary? Why go against right-wing ideology and create a giant government that will have four layers, as set out in Bill 103, versus the current two?

It took me a while to figure these questions out because the answers were so unbelievable to me. The PC government is so doctrinaire and obsessed with its power that it will use any means necessary to keep it. Toronto just happens to stand in the way. These Tories are not Conservatives; they are authoritarians who would make the old central planners of past regimes proud. The Fascist dictators and Communists present and past had no regard for their citizens. Their prime concern was holding on to power.

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Ladies and gentlemen, we now have tyranny Ontario-style: the unholy marriage of left-wing centralist ideology and right-wing fiscal radicalism. This regime wants desperately to keep its tax-cut promise because they feel that their grip on power depends on it, so much so that they're willing to recklessly rearrange Ontario's service delivery structure to do so. This means that the government has to unload all of its expensive responsibilities on to the municipalities, and because Toronto helps and attracts less fortunate citizens, Toronto is the loser.

Suburban and rural municipalities come out even or ahead, which suits this government fine. The cold political calculation was made that those outside Toronto are the ones they have to answer to, because that is where their constituency lies. I am certain that at some time, somewhere in a backroom someone said, "Let's take advantage of the anti-Toronto sentiment in the sticks."

But this government probably could not get away with it under the six-city model that it originally favoured. Scarborough and York would be bankrupt under the load. Al Leach had a problem. His party indicated it would get rid of Metro, also known to him as a tier of government. Since he probably could not get away with downloading it on to six cities, he and his ministry had to amalgamate into a large government. It also fit in neatly with a number of other political objectives the government had, namely, eliminating that pesky left-wing council in downtown Toronto.

What do we have here in Bill 103 besides the untimely death of Toronto? We have a complete abandonment of democratic process so that these changes can be rammed through so quickly, no one will notice how destructive and diabolical they are. We have a Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing abandoning and ignoring all evidence showing how destructive Bill 103 will be to Toronto. We have a government that throws a healthy city with 2.3 million citizens into a Mixmaster, hoping

the mush will reconstitute itself. We have Al Leach arrogantly in contempt of the people. We have a Premier presiding over his fiefdom using public funds to disperse an Orwellian orgy of propaganda to advance his party's agenda. We have so many subversions of democratic principle, one has to conclude that democracy in this province is dying fast.

I ask you, Isabel Basset, John Hastings, Douglas Ford, Jim Brown and Julia Munro, to sincerely stand up and be counted. I ask you to not allow this bill to be passed for the greater good of this province. I ask you to let Toronto live. Thank you.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much for coming forward here today, Mr Lofsky. We've spoken on this subject before. You've raised the issue of the timeliness of the things we're pursuing here and the fact of consensus-building. How do you reconcile the fact that the mayors themselves produced a report in December that in virtually every area, for example, the reduction in the size of the council, the elimination of one level of government, the fact that all services should be coordinated, each in one centrally planned and administered office — in every substantive case the mayors themselves put their names to a document in December that agreed with every single, solitary thing we're doing in Bill 103, unless you want to split hairs.

They suggested we should cut to 48 councillors; our bill says 44. They said you could save \$240 million; KPMG says \$300 million, but I'll accept their \$240 million. How did they find those dollars? By saying that every single aspect of each service should be coordinated, the only difference being that all garbage should be handled by Scarborough Metro-wide and all licensing for Metro should be handled by East York etc. So when even the mayors of the cities themselves, in concert with their councils, have signed a report that comes back and says on every single one of those substantive issues they're in agreement with us, how do you reconcile your statement that this is either rushed or inappropriate, given that the mayors themselves came to similar conclusions?

Mr Lofsky: I don't accept that everything they proposed is in Bill 103, but that mayors' report was also rushed. Regardless of whether you agree with that or with Bill 103, I think the question has to be taken to the people and they have to be given time to understand what's in both of those proposals.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Lofsky, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

JINI STOLK

The Chair: Would Jini Stolk please come forward.

Ms Jini Stolk: I'm very pleased to be here today to speak about something I feel passionately about, Bill 103, the megacity bill. Like many of my friends and neighbours I have been dismayed, even shocked by the scarcity of public consultation and debate undertaken by the government before initiating a change of this magnitude. Having the opportunity to come here and speak my mind at these hearings is very important to me, and I thank you for the opportunity.

I have many concerns about the implications of Bill 103 but I have decided to limit my comments today to what I know best: my own experiences in dealing with municipal governments.

I have been lucky enough to be much involved over the years in municipal issues because my life and profession have been centred in the city of Toronto. I'm currently the general manager of Toronto Dance Theatre, which is the leading modern dance company in English Canada, and president of the board of Artscape, an organization unique to Toronto which works to provide affordable work space and live-work space for artists. Before moving to Toronto Dance Theatre I was for 10 years executive director of the Toronto Theatre Alliance, and before that I also worked in publishing and in visual arts.

I've had the privilege of being part of the tremendous growth in the arts and cultural sector in Toronto over the past 25 years, and throughout my career I have also been very much involved in the development of municipal policies and initiatives to strengthen that community. Over that time I've worked extensively with two levels of government, the city of Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto, and have worked, but less extensively, with local arts councils in the other cities and in the greater Toronto area.

Because I've also travelled throughout the United States to meet with municipal performing arts alliances in all the major cities, I feel that I have a pretty fair knowledge of how arts and cities work. My experience has been that the two-tier system we have had in Toronto has worked very much to the advantage not only of the arts community, providing the resources, encouragement and environment which is allowed to grow to the extent it has, but also to the entire Metro region. The few frustrations I've experienced in dealing with more than one group of politicians and bureaucrats were far more than offset by the flexibility and responsiveness I found in a system where there was essentially a logical and workable division of responsibilities.

The city of Toronto is of course where most arts organizations in the region are located: the theatres, the dance studios, galleries and workshops. The relationship of these cultural amenities to the health and wellbeing of the city itself is obvious at the local level. Councillors live next to artists, they have theatre companies down the block and they can see on a daily basis how the arts influence the flourishing of small businesses like restaurants, cafés, bookstores and parking lots located near an arts venue. The urban lifestyle is important to their constituents and usually it's very important to them.

The Toronto Arts Council, not surprisingly, is the most responsive of the funding organizations. Its decisions are made at arm's length and they're therefore removed from political pressures, and its board is made up largely of artists, so it's therefore mostly concerned with the creative process. As a result it is the most risk-taking of the funding organizations. It has programs for individual artists and it is the funder most likely to take a chance on funding the new and untried. It has given many fine and prominent artists whose names you will certainly know their first support. It has also been extremely efficient. It spends less in terms of cost of administration versus

dollars spent on the arts through grants than any other councils.

Metro council, through its culture division, is also a supporter of the arts, but in a significantly different way. Metro's policies have focused on accessibility and ensuring that Scarborough residents, Etobicoke and East York residents have access to the arts of their own area and within the region. Part of that is keeping costs down so the arts are affordable to people wherever they live. Metro culture division and Metro council are also interested in the financial impact of the arts on the region. That's why they've always been concerned about the arts as a major employer in the region and with the close relationship of the arts to the growth of the tourism industry.

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There are different policies at the two levels, different priorities, and the results, taken together, are extremely effective. Councillors at the Metro level, however, are also dealing with very large issues and large budgets, way larger than the arts budget, including and especially the social services budget, the welfare budget, police and the TTC.

Over the past few years, as there have been increasing pressures on these budgets, the arts experienced a 25% loss in funding at Metro. I anticipate that this sort of pressure will only increase, has to increase, with the downloading proposals being brought forth by the province and that the argument I have made and my colleagues and friends have made that the economic future of the metropolitan area depends on a strong, vibrant arts community will increasingly lose against the economic crises of the here and now.

The system we now have in the arts and, I would also like to argue, in many other areas of social life in Toronto works. It works remarkably well, and I certainly heard no compelling reason from the government to put it at risk. It has allowed us to achieve a thriving cultural infrastructure which is the envy of people across North America. None of my colleagues, those I've worked with who also work in the arts community in their cities, feels as connected to the local political process or had the access to the local politicians and the ability to work with them to develop policies which are good for the arts and good for the municipality as I have had in my time in Toronto.

I have been proud to be part of a democratic system where people care about local elections and turn out to vote. This is actually amazing and I wonder if we realize how lucky we are in just the basic involvement and turnout at the local level in Toronto, a system which is accountable to its constituents and responsive to local and regional needs. People in the city of Toronto and in the other municipalities can reach our councillors, can present them with information and expect to be listened to. They are representing us and they can deal with the voices of their individual constituents. This does not always mean we're successful — certainly we have lost many battles over the years — but we're listened to and the process of decision-making is both open and fair.

I have always believed that these were some of the structural reasons which have saved Toronto from

becoming like almost all cities now in the United States, where downtown neighbourhoods have become home only to the poor, where the infrastructure has crumbled, where anyone who cares about good education or quality service has no choice but to move to the suburbs.

I wonder if we realize how lucky we are. My friends in the States have trouble believing that I live right downtown, as close as I do — I live at Bathurst and College — I'm not afraid of crime; I send my kids to the local schools, and they're wonderful schools, and they're just around the corner; that myself and my children have access to affordable and accessible social programs; that we also enjoy and have one of the most flourishing arts communities on the continent. This is why people want to live in Toronto and why businesses want to locate here. We have something wonderful going on here and I am willing to fight very hard to keep it.

I was speaking this morning to Sandra Shamas, who, you probably know, is one of Canada's great comedians, and she said when I was speaking to her about this issue: "Human beings do not megacity. It's in our nature to form groups of families, neighbours to work together in communities and to share, to solve our problems collectively and together and to rejoice in our triumphs collectively."

I'm here today to appeal to the better judgement of the government members: It's not broke; don't fix it.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please, folks. We'd like to get some questions from the Liberal caucus. Mr Colle.

Mr Colle: How much time, Mr Chair?

The Chair: Two minutes.

Mr Colle: Ms Stolk, thank you very much for your presentation. You hit a real light for me when you mentioned Bathurst and College, having grown up there back in the 1950s. I think that area is a perfect example of how cities heal themselves and how cities become prosperous socially, theatrically, economically. Can you explain to the members of the government caucus what is happening on College between Bathurst and Ossington these days?

Ms Stolk: Yes. It is a success story. It was an area of town that was not thriving. The businesses along that strip had been failing and had been leaving, and it is now totally revitalized. It is a combination of the arts community and small business which has seen that revitalization. There are now cafes, restaurants, all of them doing extremely well. There's a nightlife and in fact a wonderful Sunday brunch life. It's a day life and it's a nightlife that wasn't there just a few years ago.

Some of those cafes and restaurants that started this trend were started by artists or by people who had come out of the arts community who decided that they needed places to go and they developed restaurants. They didn't know; they were taking a chance. The rents were low. It wasn't a place where restaurants were typically found, so rents were very low. They went in and they spent a lot of their own time and their energy, and what's now developed as a very thriving business community.

It's an example of what we see with Artscape, as an example, all the time. When we build live-work spaces for artists in a neighbourhood, within a year the neigh-

bourhood is looking up. Businesses are growing, they move in, the neighbours are happy, developments begin. It's not difficult to look and to see what happens, and it's part of the collectivity of small neighbourhoods that I think is essential. It's made Toronto what it is today.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

JENNIFER WATKINS

The Chair: Would Jennifer Watkins please come forward. Good afternoon, Ms Watkins. Welcome to the committee.

Ms Jennifer Watkins: Thank you. I come before this hearing as an individual citizen of Ontario who has resided in the city of Toronto, very enjoyably, for over 20 years. My time before you is brief and my point of view as a member of the electorate must be taken seriously.

On December 30, 1996, at a public meeting of concerned citizens, members of the electorate of the province of Ontario, I wrote a letter requesting my assumed democratic right to present my concerns to the government regarding Bill 103 at public hearings. At that time, my primary motivation in writing was to ensure that the current majority government of Ontario follow democratic process and listen to the concerns of the electorate regarding Bill 103.

Although hearings are taking place and I'm here speaking, I am still concerned by the government's insistence on ramming this legislation through and making massive changes so quickly that proper debate and appropriate involvement of local citizens is not possible. It is not possible, as there is no time allowed for people to truly comprehend the effects of the contents of the legislation before it is passed. I also understand that this type of public debate would have more appropriate prior to the second reading of the bill.

The day after I wrote that letter, a blue and white Ontario government brochure showed up in my mailbox, proclaiming One Toronto for All of Us. I was shocked and offended by this slick portrayal that seemed to assume the legislation had passed, that amalgamation was a done deal and we would all live happily ever after.

I received this publication less than 24 hours after I learned that the government had removed local democracy by placing our elected council under trusteeship and that the decisions of this provincially appointed board of trustees, as outlined in subsection 12(1), is final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court. I voted for my city council but had no say in its loss of powers. It was hard to comprehend that all this was happening before Bill 103 had even reached second reading in the House.

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Although I speak alone, I know my concerns, my anxiety and fear regarding Bill 103 are shared by hundreds, if not thousands, of people facing the forced amalgamation of the cities and boroughs that now comprise the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. The government is holding our cities hostage and has declared the citizens of Metro the enemy. The government chooses to use this legislation to force the amalgamation of a region of 2.3 million persons because the government wishes to exercise more control in this region. Why do I think this?

I would next ask: Is bigger better? Most experts don't think so and many studies of other amalgamated regions prove it is not. "Less is more" is a paradigm originally coined by post-modern artists, architects and designers. This philosophy looks at elements of design where a simple statement could be made through reducing the complexity of form. Bill 103 also follows this principle, giving it a whole new meaning. The objective is to have fewer elected politicians on the payroll to carry out policy, ostensibly to save money. This set up will actually reduce the opportunity for citizens to have an active voice in the democratic process that allows us to participate in decisions made by these politicians who are meant to represent our interests. Despite the appearance of less government, this mega-government will actually have more power and control when the voice of the citizen on the local level is removed.

As the majority, the government feels that it has the right to proceed on this course. They seem to think this majority gives them a kind of divine right to carry out this agenda based on neo-conservative ideology that is so prevalent in the United States. This ideology follows that if you, the provincial government in this case, unload the payment for social services to the lowest possible government, the power to tax effectively is not there. Successful in this dumping, the government would be able to live up to its platform to reduce the provincial deficit and it will be able to provide the promised tax cut. They will be able to do this because they will have passed off their responsibility for finding money to cover these services on to the municipalities, which can ill afford to cover them from property taxes.

In my study of history and rational thought I learned that it is always important to consider the short as well as the long-term effects of any decision, policy or legislation. The government, while paying lip service to this long-term betterment of Ontario, has the short-term goal of providing a tax cut to the wealthy on the backs of the middle class, the poor and the disadvantaged. Class lines are being drawn.

The government was elected on the catchphrase "common sense." If you hold to the aim of ramming through this legislation, it must be noted that your methodology of imposing this amalgamation is both uncommon and nonsensical.

Bill 103 should be not brought forward for final passage until it is clear to the electorate what all the implications are. Extensive public debate must occur and citizens must be allowed to decide. Local people must solve local issues. Therefore, I ask the government to extend the range of public debate beyond the current forum into the communities, that the third and final reading of Bill 103 be postponed and, finally, to respect the results of the municipal plebiscites and referenda.

The Chair: We have about three minutes if you'd like to entertain some questions. Mr Marchese.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): Thank you for your presentation. I have a question around something the Toronto Star editorial presents almost on a daily basis and that this government and its members echo constantly. They say: "We're not losing democracy. We still are going to have an elected group of people. Yes, it's big

but there will be 44 Metro councillors." So presumably because of that, democracy hasn't disappeared. Everybody will have a say and will be able to go to that government and still be able to do what they did before. Do you see it that way?

Ms Watkins: It's difficult for me to see into the future regarding how this supposed government will respond. I personally am afraid of the process we're in, where the voices of the people are not being heard now. We will not be able to be involved in any process that will allow appropriate government and representation to occur for the citizens. I too live in a downtown, very vital neighbourhood at College and Spadina. I've lived practically next door to councillors and blocks from my city hall. I do not want to lose that connection and ability to be involved in my community and to affect its future.

Mr Marchese: I just want to agree with much of what you said in terms of people being involved and needing time to find out exactly what is happening, because there's still a lot of people who don't have a clue.

Ms Watkins: No.

Mr Marchese: Only the active ones have engaged themselves to understand. But what is clear to me is that the further you remove yourself from a bigger government, the less involvement you have and the more unreachable they are. I know that when I started at the Toronto Board of Education as a trustee, there was a great deal of public involvement because people are very close to their local schools and to the board. Similarly, with the Toronto city council, the closer you are, the more involvement you're going to get. The further you're removed, it seems, from my practical experience in politics for a long time as an active person, you get fewer and fewer people who will be able to reach their councils. Is that your sense?

Ms Watkins: Yes. I agree with that completely. I feel that I made some of those points in my presentation and hope that they will be considered.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

RUTH COHEN

The Chair: May I please have Ruth Cohen come forward. Good afternoon.

Ms Ruth Cohen: Thank you. My name is Ruth Cohen. I'd like to thank the committee for giving me this time to speak to Bill 103.

By way of introduction, I would just like the committee to know that I've lived in downtown Toronto virtually all my life, except for a brief period when I was at university in the southwest of the United States. I grew up in the College-Spadina area, in a house on Huron Street which later became a Buddhist temple, among other things.

I count myself fortunate indeed to have attended as unforgettable a school as Harbord Collegiate and to have had the benefit of living close to the magnificent libraries at St George and College, with early beginnings in the Boys and Girls House of that bygone day. It was only in later years that I realized how fortunate I was to have benefited as well from the wonderful programs available to children in those days, especially in the arts and music.

I will of course never forget those free concerts at Varsity Stadium, where as a teenager I gained my first introduction to the classics, an interest which has continued on to the present day, mainly through the medium of the CBC. Another wonderful memory is the conservatory, where I took piano lessons, and the art gallery, where I took Saturday morning art classes from Arthur Lismer. That places me pretty well, I think.

I lived in a diverse, vital neighbourhood, which I contrast with the solid bank of strip malls which awaits under the new regime. I happen to know first hand what happens to the inner core of cities when untrammelled development occurs. I studied anthropology and philosophy at the University of Denver and the University of New Mexico. When I was at school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, way back when, the town was a veritable jewel in the sun: a main street with all kinds of fascinating stores, neighbourhoods with cosy adobe houses, Old Town with its smell of piñon wafting over the colonial buildings. When I visited again 15 years later, I was shocked to find the downtown completely gone, looking like a bombed-out area, all boarded up, literally overrun by rats.

This has been the American experience, repeated over and over again, the one we have avoided here in Toronto. Those of us who have participated in making our town livable will not allow this to happen here. We've been through too much to get to where we are — the place known the world over as the most livable city in the world — to see it demolished through the current ideology of privatization.

1700

Yes, it's true there are experiments going on all over the US in privatizing welfare, privatizing schools, privatizing hospitals, but that's not us — not here, not now, not ever. We will be a beacon here in Toronto. We will stand fast and continue on the route to sane policies for a sane society. We're educated people here — maybe that's what you have against us; I don't know — the product of our school system and our municipal and provincial institutions. We're quite capable of determining our own future within the kind of enlightened, intelligent representation we've had up to now.

Those of us who object to this impending juggernaut rolling over us have been accused of being old fogies, stuck in the old ways, unwilling to accept change. That's the usual definition of Tories, isn't it, or Conservatives? We do not see ourselves as conservatives actually, though we tend to see some of you, as you have described yourselves, as revolutionaries — revolutionaries, unfortunately, to the point of anarchy. While we are not conservatives, we are not anarchists either. We are conservationists perhaps, and we are terribly concerned about what this bill will do to all those regulatory functions that are designed to protect us, to protect the environment, that respond to human need, human peril, human desire for fulfilment.

It is wrong to think that we are just creatures of habit and don't like change. As a matter of fact, most thinking people today believe that huge changes have to be made very soon if we are even to survive as a species and if all

the other species on this planet are to survive, but not like these. These will exacerbate, not correct.

What is most disturbing is a strange tendency on the part of your ministers and those who drafted this weird piece of legislation to be completely impervious to any argument, any analysis, any exhaustive demonstration that this imposed restructuring not only cannot work but is certain to have catastrophic consequences. Yet it is perfectly obvious to the ordinary citizen, as well as to those in opposition, as well as to experts of your own choosing, that the provisions in this bill will bankrupt our city and are a violation of the democratic rights of citizens to determine how they shall be governed.

We insist that any restructuring proceed through the normal channels of discussion and debate provided by our parliamentary system and our municipal governments, and not by fiat or decree as this bill does. We are trying to tell you that this is not the way to go. It will have the opposite effect from what you intend.

I have some recommendations because of my past training in the disciplines of philosophy and anthropology. I recommend a rethinking of the purpose of government. I recommend the acceptance of the starting premise that humans are cultural beings, not just economic units. Every finding of the biological and anthropological sciences confirms that is an irrefutable fact.

The implications of that premise would be far-reaching and would transform government, education and the delivery of services in a direction hardly even envisaged by those who worship at the shrine of the free market as the be-all and end-all of human endeavour. Yet it's this very cultural dimension, the defining hallmark of the human species, that gets thrown out the window by attempts like this to govern on the basis of consumerism alone.

As an example, the implications for education would be that, far from privatizing schools to be run by big business conglomerates with a view to churning out happy little cogs in machines that don't even exist any more, it would emphasize cultivation of the higher mental faculties, a project some would admittedly find rather challenging.

Ursula Franklin has put it in her usual succinct fashion when she pointed out recently that the city is not just a resource base but also a habitat. She also said that it is dead wrong for some people to profit from other people's misery.

Scientists from every discipline are warning that we only have 10 years to effect changes which call for the most massive cooperative effort in the history of the planet, certainly not some kind of dog-eat-dog throwback to primitive times. We have to become profoundly ethical and respectful of life. Plundering the earth, exploiting the people, is not the way to go. That is the kind of thinking that requires immediate, radical change.

You may become aware through this exercise that there are thousands of people in Toronto, and for that matter in Ontario, who will fight with their last breath to make sure this great public enterprise is not derailed by legislation such as this.

Interruption.

The Chair: Order. Thank you, Ms Cohen, for your presentation. You effectively utilized your 10 minutes. I appreciate your coming forward to make your presentation to the committee today.

MARY MCGEE

The Chair: Would Mary McGee please come forward. Welcome to the committee, Ms McGee.

Ms Mary McGee: Members of the standing committee on general government, I am here today to speak to you about Bill 103. I hope, when you look at me, you see me for what I am: a middle-aged, middle-class woman who works and lives in Toronto with her husband and children. I hope, when you listen to me, you hear the voice of a Toronto resident who, with the introduction of this legislation, realized that voting is not a sufficient discharge of one's civic duty. That is why I requested an opportunity to speak during the hearings on Bill 103.

I was raised to believe that life in a democracy meant individuals had certain rights and that those rights entailed corresponding duties. In a democracy we have the right to participate in our own governance. The corresponding duty is to vote in elections. The message to voters sent by Bill 103 is that voting in municipal elections does not safeguard their right to a representative local government.

I have read Bill 103 and I am deeply concerned, because this is what I learned: First, Bill 103 removes the authority of local councils to pass a resolution relating to a payment not provided for in the budget; to make purchases over \$50,000; to transfer money among reserve funds or change the purpose of reserve funds; to enter into contracts that extend beyond December 31, 1997; to hire or promote employees; to negotiate termination settlements. In short, Bill 103 prevents local councillors from performing the duties they were elected to carry out.

Secondly, the authority that has been taken from elected councillors has been given to a board of three provincially appointed trustees. The trustees are given additional powers, including the authority to review, amend and approve the 1997 operating and capital budgets and to hire staff, arrange for facilities and obtain expert services in order to perform their functions. Decisions made by the trustees cannot be subjected to judicial review. Actions taken by the trustees are shielded from damage proceedings. Expenses incurred by the trustees become a municipal responsibility. In short, Bill 103 provides appointed trustees with total responsibility for the conduct of municipal affairs and no accountability to the residents of the six municipalities.

Thirdly, Bill 103 calls for the establishment of a transition team and grants the team the authority to make recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on further legislation to implement amalgamation and on the levels of municipal taxation and expenditures.

The legislation gives the transition team the power to establish the new city's basic organizational structure and to hire department heads and other employees. It empowers them to make recommendations to the new city

council on the function and membership of neighbourhood committees and on the rationalization of municipal services. In short, Bill 103 establishes an entity which at present is nameless and faceless to be the sole architects of the new city. For all I know, they may not even be among the residents of the new city that they design.

1710

Now that I have highlighted what Bill 103 calls for, I would like to point out what this legislation does not ensure. It does not ensure the dissolution of either the board of trustees or the transition team and it does not ensure the members of neighbourhood committees will be elected.

To say Bill 103 ends local democracy is not, as some have said, a radical statement. It is not, as others have said, scaremongering or apocalyptic rhetoric. It is simply a reasonable conclusion on the part of the reader.

Upon finishing Bill 103, the reader is forced to consider the following questions: Is it necessary? Will it result in savings? How will it affect the quality of urban life? Finally, is it part of the Common Sense Revolution?

In considering whether Bill 103 is necessary, one is asking whether municipal governments have been so irresponsible that they brought about their own demise. In examining that proposition, I would like to focus on Toronto.

The city of Toronto operates within a balanced budget. The city government has been streamlining since the early 1990s, and the result has been a 15% reduction in the total number of personnel. In 1996 the city undertook a complete reorganization of its structure for delivering municipal services. It started at the top and by spring had replaced 13 commissioners with a four-person board of management. By fall 1996 the number of directors was reduced from 81 to 37. The reorganization of management at the lower levels is still under way. Toronto has been streamlining and restructuring. The city government has been acting responsibly.

Another way to evaluate the necessity of Bill 103 is to consider whether amalgamation is the only method of improving local government. Of 25 recent reports on governance in the Toronto area, none supports amalgamation. No report published by or for any government in the last 40 years recommends amalgamation of the municipalities that make up Metropolitan Toronto.

In considering whether Bill 103 will result in savings, one is asking whether unit costs will decline if seven structures are folded into one. The answer can be found in research on Canadian and American cities. Andrew Sancton, director of the local government program at the University of Western Ontario, examined municipal consolidations in three provinces, including Ontario, and concluded that there is no evidence that consolidation produces savings. He points to what he describes as the vast academic evidence that connects increasing municipal population and increasing municipal per capita expenditures.

Wendell Cox, an expert on local government efficiency and responsiveness, evaluated the new city proposed by Bill 103 on the basis of two key principles advanced by the Crombie Who Does What advisory panel. As far as

the principle of democracy, accountability and responsiveness is concerned, Cox concluded that the weight of the evidence is on the side of smaller governmental units. Smaller governments are more accountable, more responsive and more attuned to neighbourhoods than larger governments. Larger governments are more susceptible to special interests and more difficult for the elected officials to control.

With respect to the efficiency principle, larger governments have higher unit costs than smaller governments. The research from the United States shows that amalgamations similar to the one proposed by Bill 103 do not save money. American amalgamated cities with populations greater than one million have per capita costs that are more than double those of amalgamated cities with populations between 500,000 and one million.

The explanation for the higher unit costs, according to both Sancton and Cox, lies in the fact that government mergers are characterized by cost escalation pressures. Where there may be savings in eliminating duplication in administration, administrative costs represent only 10% to 15% of municipal budgets. These savings are more than offset by rising wage and service standards. In fact the evidence from US studies is so strong that in 1987 a United States federal government advisory commission reversed its position on consolidation and began supporting fragmentation.

In examining whether Bill 103 will produce more effective and efficient local government, the question of its impact on the quality of urban life has been answered. Since larger government is less democratic, less responsive and more expensive, the quality of life will decline, yet it is the quality of life in Toronto that has made this city a world leader, according to a recent *Forbes* magazine survey. Whether the measure is fiscal or social, the current Toronto is efficient and effective; it is not in need of replacing with a new Toronto.

This brings me to the final question: Is Bill 103 part of the Common Sense Revolution which commits the government to reducing overlap and duplication? No, it is not, not if we are to believe the words of the Premier, who prior to the 1995 election went on record with the Ontario Taxpayers Federation regarding this issue. In answer to very specific questions, Premier Harris said he would not eliminate local municipalities and transfer the responsibilities to regional governments. Furthermore, he said that this issue was not too complicated for the average citizen to decide by referendum and that any such referendum would be binding.

I would like to close by saying Bill 103 has no redeeming merits. It shows a lack of respect for 2.3 million residents of Metropolitan Toronto. It delivers the death blow to local democracy. In Toronto's case that means the end of a 200-year-old tradition. It takes strong cities and makes them vulnerable to urban decay. It goes against the rules of public finance. For all these reasons, I believe Bill 103 must be withdrawn.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation today. You've effectively exhausted all of your 10 minutes, and I appreciate your coming forward to make your presentation.

RICHARD JESSOP

The Chair: Would Richard Jessop please come forward. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. You may begin, sir.

Mr Richard Jessop: Thank you for the opportunity of presenting to the committee today. I'm Richard Jessop and I'm president of the Avenue Road-Eglinton Community Association. We're an association in north Toronto.

As an association we have no position on Bill 103, either for or against. However, that does not mean we do not have significant concerns with the bill. These concerns are the speed with which it's being rammed through, the cost-effectiveness in service levels that could follow the implementation of the bill, our access to local government and the issues of fiscal responsibility in a larger government unit.

I'll deal with the first: speed. There have been a number of alternatives proposed, the Golden commission, the Crombie report etc. As the last speaker said, none of those seems to have proposed a megacity. In fact the report by the six mayors, a recent proposal that came out, seems to have the same thoughts about the megacity as would be proposed by the Progressive Conservatives, and what we have here is change for the better, elimination of duplication, improved coordination through the GTA, cutting the number of politicians by 52% and a saving of \$240 million a year. Who are we to believe? Do we believe the six mayors' proposal or the megacity proposal?

There's a need to debate which is the best structure. Structures need to be robust. Today the PCs are in favour in government; tomorrow it could be the NDP; the day after, the Liberals. The economy may be up; the economy may be down. We need structures in place that go beyond the flavour of today. The speed with which we're moving here makes me suspicious of the motives, again particularly since the non-partisan committees, having looked into this, have not recommended a megacity.

One would also say if other areas of the province have been given the opportunity to decide their own fate, one wonders why Toronto cannot have that same option.

Can I now turn to cost-effectiveness? Again, both sides of the debate, the six mayors' report and the pro-megacity through the KPMG report, are claiming cost savings. Who are we to believe? Again, the only empirical evidence I've seen, as the previous speaker has quoted, is the Wendell Cox report, which talks about cities greater than one million having significantly more per capita spending than cities of less than one million.

1720

Let me tell you from own personal experience about what I think amalgamation will cause. In my other life working for a living, I had the responsibility to merge two divisions within a large company. Both of those divisions had 200 people each, and I was able to merge the two divisions and effect a downsizing of 30% of the staff. I would say it was done humanely, effectively and efficiently. But how did I achieve that downsizing of 30% staff, you may ask. We stopped work. We didn't do capital project work that was on the books.

One wonders what we'll stop in the city of Toronto. We've talked about the merging of the fire departments. I doubt if we're going to close all the fire departments in the city of Toronto and have Etobicoke service. Therefore, I can only presuppose it's going to be through reduced service levels.

The other thing I managed to do quite effectively in the amalgamation that I did was a lot of soft service costs: accounting, payroll, things like that we managed to merge. That effected quite a few savings. However, it was not insignificant. We had systems within the company that were the same system, so that didn't pose a problem. I have also been responsible for implementing systems within the company that re-engineered the company, so to speak, and they do not come without significant costs. The transition was also terribly disruptive and created undue concern for the employees, as you would expect. My conclusion from my experience is that transition is costly and painful, and we have to do it.

Tom Jakobek, a councillor with the city of Toronto, was quoted at a meeting I attended as saying the amalgamation will cost \$400 million. I figure it will be a lot more. From a business case perspective then, as I have to put business cases together for my business and any work that we do, my boss wants to know there are going to be certain savings to defray risk. I'm not sure I'd bankroll this one, given particularly the notion the six mayors say duplication can be eliminated without amalgamation. So, as a request from the ratepayers, we requested that the government set aside for this megacity a minimum of \$500 million for the transition, and this is aside from any funding you're going to have to set aside for the downloading of welfare.

Now I'd like to talk about the issue of access to local government. I've lived in both Scarborough and Toronto, and they are extremely different cities and have unique characteristics. We have bylaws to protect us and we have planning rules to protect us. The large city hall will create an impetus towards a common average.

I've got a quote from the Toronto Star, Monday, January 27, and this is Staff Inspector Gary Grant, head of Metro's parking enforcement unit: "He said that, with one bylaw, there will be a single fine for the same offence across the city." Whoopee. This is the bureaucrats' view of the world, and it really does not support the notion of the unique communities that we have within our city.

I'd like to turn to the Conservatives' view of how to fix these things proposed in Bill 103, and that is to replace our current two-tier government with a three-tier government to rectify the situation and, with the downsizing of the councillors, I hope they've got enough time to deal with the individual residents in their ratepayer groups.

Having said that, though, one would hope Bill 103 will address the local councils being open to grass-roots involvement. They should not be political appointments. The other things that these grass-roots community committees will need is accountability. Otherwise, it's meaningless. I've been on teams, committees, whatever, where I've had no accountability and felt very frustrated. They will not work.

We also need mechanisms for the community associations, of which I'm the president, so that they can also be heard in a larger city. The OMB is not listening today. Who is to suppose that they will in the future?

I'd now like to get to the last issue of fiscal responsibility. This will be a government accountable for over \$1 billion. There are trustees in place for the time being looking after that, and we've heard that some people think that's an unworkable situation. It certainly is unworkable in the long run.

1730

How are we to mitigate problems created by large governments who are less controllable and will be more open to special interests? Well, you better put rules in Bill 103 for the lobbyists. As neighbourhood community committees, we run on very thin budgets. We're lucky at any time if we have \$1,000 in our community committee.

Also, large governments beget large unions, and again I can speak of that from my business experience. I think the previous speaker spoke about that one. I will quote from the Wendell Cox report. It says: "Successive collective agreements can be expected to increase the compensation of municipal employees to the level of the highest-paid workforce of the pre-existing cities. Downward convergence in labour rates is unprecedented." This is not very comforting from a taxpayer's point of view.

In summary, I would request that the government reconsider what they're doing and be receptive to other views and other recommendations. The citizens of Toronto, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, East York and York have worked hard to provide civic pride for their citizens, develop community centres, city halls to define their presence and personality and have created one of the best cities in the world. The citizens of Toronto deserve the best structure in the future to maintain that well-deserved global reputation. Let them have the choice. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Jessop. You've effectively exhausted your 10 minutes. I appreciate your coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

ROBERT KATZ

The Chair: Would Mr Robert Katz please come forward. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. Go ahead, sir.

Mr Robert Katz: I will attempt to be brief, if I can, but I just wanted to say that I'm very honoured to be here, first because I respect all of the people in this building and on this committee and also because I particularly have come to respect, through knowing them and seeing them in action, Mr Mike Colle and Ms Isabel Bassett, who have served our Toronto community through an awful lot of volunteer work and a lot of tireless work on their own. So this certainly is a place where I feel what I have to say can be listened to. Thank you for inviting me.

I live on Wellesley Street East in Toronto. My wife and I have lived on that street for just over 25 years. I run a business on Danforth Avenue. I employ seven people and I've been doing that for almost 10 years. I

mention that because I do have roots in this community and I do have a lot of concern for the community in which I live.

What I plan to do today is to focus entirely on the one issue of the binding referendum, because if I tried to focus on all of the issues of Bill 103, I would have to go very quickly and cover a lot of ground without any real depth.

On the issue of the binding referendum, I begin by noting that I have an adult daughter who lives in Quebec. My daughter is a federalist. She does not want to lose her Canadian citizenship and she does not want to see Quebec separate. She knows this may happen. I think that's the reality of any federalist living in Quebec; they know that they may lose their country. But at least she is comforted by two things.

First, there is an understanding in Quebec that that province will not separate from Canada unless and until two things happen. The first thing that will happen is that the people of Quebec will elect a government that says, "We are committed to separating," and they will knowingly elect a government that says, "We want to separate from Canada."

The second thing is that the people of Quebec will vote in a referendum in favour of separation. So my daughter feels that she has a chance living in Quebec. She can work against a separatist government and she can work for a No vote in a referendum. She may lose and if she loses, well, that's too bad. She'll feel sad about it and maybe come back to Toronto and maybe not, but at least she has the option of electing a government, knowing full well what they'll do and voting in a referendum knowing that will shape the decision that is made.

I want the same prerogative for myself, for my family, for my neighbours who live in Toronto. I want the prerogative of knowing, as I vote in an election, whether or not the party that's coming to my door plans to amalgamate Toronto or get rid of Metro, and I would like, once Bill 103 has been proposed, for there to be a referendum which is binding upon the government. I feel I should have that same right that anybody in Quebec has.

I appreciate that there are situations in which referendums are inappropriate. Specifically, when an issue is integral to a government's policy, if they hold a referendum on that one issue and it's defeated, that would prevent the government from going forth with its overall policy. I submit that amalgamating Toronto is not integral to any part of the government's policy, that it is something the government feels it should do in the interests of efficiency, but not because it's essential to the government of Ontario that it be done. This makes it a very appropriate issue for a referendum.

I followed Mr Leach very carefully throughout the debate because he happens to be my own member of provincial Parliament. When Mr Leach introduced the amalgamation bill, the first thing he said was: "Don't waste time arguing against it. We won't listen to anything you say. Our mind is made up and we are convinced." He told us not to waste our money on a referendum because no matter how many people vote against the megacity, he doesn't care, this is something that he intends to do to us notwithstanding. Explaining his rationale, he said, "The

issue is just too complicated for people to understand." Those were his words: "It's too complicated."

Now without any disrespect for the people in this room, and I really do have respect for these people, I don't think there is a single person in this room who is any more or any less qualified to determine the future of Toronto than I am. I don't think that any member of provincial Parliament elected from a riding out of town should feel comfortable coming to Toronto and deciding to ruin this city against the wishes of its people.

I feel that is a decision that should be made by local people, and it's quite possible we'll do it wrong. Maybe, just maybe, Mr Leach is right and this megacity will be more efficient than the six cities and one Metro structure that already exist, and if he is right and I am wrong, I can live with the consequences of my decision. I've lived here for many years and I plan to live here for many years more, and if I've made a mistake, I can accept that.

So too perhaps I've misestimated everything. Perhaps when the referendum is held, everybody will vote in favour of amalgamation. If that happens, I promise you I will write a letter of apology to Mr Leach and I will say, "You were right and I was wrong, and I will drop this issue forever."

The one and only thing I'm asking today is for the right to have this decision made via binding referendum, following which this committee will recommend that the government do what the people of Toronto are requesting be done, whatever that may be. Thank you very much.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Katz. I appreciate your coming before us today. I probably couldn't find more appropriate words to preface my question to you than one of the presenters who appeared just a few minutes before you, Ms Cohen, who said, "We insist that any restructuring proceed through the normal channels of discussion and debate provided by our parliamentary system."

Now I'd be the first to admit that those opposed to this bill have done a very creditable job from their perspective of creating the perspective that somehow referenda are part of our democratic process in this province, but as I'm sure you're aware, no previous bill has ever been debated save and except exactly the way we're doing it here today. You make your appeals directly to MPPs or you appear before a legislative committee.

Second, there is no municipal council that has submitted one of their tax increases to your consideration. There is not one that has submitted one of their outrageous severance packages to civil servants they were laying off to your consideration. For them to turn around now and suggest that somehow we should be dealing with this bill differently than the thousands of other pieces of provincial legislation is something really quite galling to anyone who really believes in the parliamentary process.

My question to you is, what is there so unique about this bill? I'm the first to admit it affects only one part of Ontario, but is the suggestion that a bill that affects 2.3 million is less worthy of this process than, say, a taxation bill that affects all 11 million Ontarians? What is there unique about this one bill that demands we have a different process just for it?

Mr Katz: There are several things that are unique about this bill, but first of all I thank you for your

question because I agree with the first part of it completely. I did not mean to suggest that this committee or this Legislature has violated any normal process. Rather I feel that the amalgamation of Toronto is analogous to the separation of Quebec; it is something so very important, so very permanent and irreversible that people deserve the right to vote because it will not hurt the government one iota if we vote no and you change your minds, but it could have a major effect on those of us who live here.

I agree with you completely: referenda are not a part of the Ontario political landscape. In fact, I never heard any Premier suggest that referenda would be a good idea until Mike Harris was elected. This is the suggestion of Mr Mike Harris, that referenda should be used to resolve difficult debates.

Mr Gilchrist: And exactly consistent with what Quebec has done.

Mr Katz: The one thing I was going to say is, if I don't like the spending habits of my city councillor, I can vote her out of office in December. If I don't like the decision the provincial government makes on Bill 103, I can't do anything about it. The matter is settled and over and we're amalgamated and nobody will be able to take humpty-dumpty and put it together again.

Mr Gilchrist: Well, I guess, Mr Katz —

The Chair: Sorry, Mr Gilchrist, but we've come to the end of the 10 minutes. I'd like to thank you, Mr Katz, for coming forward and making your presentation today.

BOB BARNETT

The Chair: Would Bob Barnett please come forward. Welcome.

Mr Bob Barnett: Thank you very much, Mr Chair and members. It's great to have this opportunity to discuss with you this issue of amalgamation. It just sounds like very simple words, but in fact it is something that involves such great symbolism. It involves the image of ourselves. Someone from Toronto is part of Toronto; Toronto is part of us. So it's not just a money issue.

I think it's interesting that we're discussing this today. We're proud of Toronto. Toronto was judged the most livable city, and that's very important to me because that's part of my life. I'm an architect and I deal with cities all over the province. I've been the president of our own residents' association; Sussex-Ulster represents 1,300 homes. Now it's the local issues that are the bread and potatoes of issues. A lot of these issues, I call them fence disputes, local things, but we have a whole city that has been built up to deal with methods of solving these local, intense problems and I'm concerned that we're tearing apart structures that we've built up and nurtured over, well, almost two centuries now.

I'm here to tell you that I agree with the fundamental principles of Bill 103. Let's look at them: saving money, providing better services and funding services provided at the local level with money that's raised at the local level. All of those things make perfect sense to me. My concern is that the details in the bill don't support the fundamental principles. Let me just tell you why I think that.

First is saving money. This bill, in my opinion — and I'm sorry; I've read a lot of the academic studies — holds for me the certainty of costing us all vast amounts of additional money. Winnipeg and Halifax have proved it. They didn't budget for the cost of amalgamation, yet it has cost them a lot of money to achieve this amalgamation and it's going to roll on and keep on costing them money. I personally believe that Andrew Sancton and Wendell Cox have it right, that both in the United States and Canada amalgamation costs more money, not less money.

This quickie, three-week KPMG study was in my opinion severely flawed. It ignored the costs of amalgamation, a fundamental problem. It ignored things like coordinating union agreements and standardizing by-laws — fundamental problems, fundamental costs. It ignored the extra costs of running a larger city. That's more bureaucracy. They completely forgot that larger cities take more bureaucracy to run them. It claimed that money could be saved by amalgamating the police when — hey — the police are already amalgamated. Big mistake. KPMG's savings came from entirely different things like using civilians for policing. That happens, I think, not to be such a bad idea, but it's got nothing to do with amalgamation; it's through other things, rationalization. KPMG itself states in its own report that they're very uncertain whether there will be any savings from amalgamation, and that's the only study that claims to even vaguely support it.

1740

Sancton and Cox were not the only ones to say that big cities have higher unit costs. Academics like Pinchot and Roberts have demonstrated that companies across North America are moving away from large company amalgamated structures and towards decentralized operating units to save money. They can provide better service at lower costs by splitting them up. Pinchot's book has a very interesting title. It's called *The Death of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization*. They prove that large organizations are more expensive for each unit of production. Another academic, Tom Roberts, in *Liberation Management* proves the same thing. They talk about CN, which is breaking itself apart; 3M, AT&T and DuPont are all breaking themselves apart to provide better service and save money, and IBM's doing it. Yet we're talking about creating something that's bigger and more bureaucratic. It's going to cost more now and it's going to cost far more later.

I suggest that the present cities be encouraged to become more efficient by giving them incentive grants. Help them to save money, reward them for saving money. If their unit costs can come down, reward them for it. Publish the unit rates of various cities. If unit rates are high, let the public punish the politician who is spending too much money. Let the taxpayers put the pressure on.

I encourage experimentation and more efficient ways to provide labour for providing the services within these cities. But we have to avoid, most important, the extra costs that surely are going to come from this amalgamation. Here's a maybe overgrandiose example, but I personally feel that the reason Communism was not a

successful system was because of the excessive cost of centralized administration. Big organizations can't plan well, can't administer well. What you get are a lot of large, simplistic projects.

Here's one: The LRT, our light rapid transit, our funny streetcar on Spadina. That was brought to us by Metro Toronto. It cost us \$150 million. It didn't bring us any new users. It might have benefitted Marathon Realty or the SkyDome, maybe, but the cost of amortizing that \$150 million is \$10 million a year. I think it's a white elephant; it's not bringing us any new revenue. The residents and the city opposed this but Metro pushed it through. That's the kind of major, white elephant, grand-scale project that large governments provide. This is contrary to smaller government, it's contrary to the Common Sense Revolution.

More than one person has suggested to me that amalgamation sounds like the kind of program Conservatives complain about. I don't think it's a local cost-efficient program, the kind that is designed by Conservatives, frankly, like me. Michael Walker, who is the executive director of the Fraser Institute in BC, has just completed a report on municipal amalgamation. He concludes that amalgamation is a poor idea because it creates a larger monopoly. We should be trying to get rid of these monopolies, not create more. We should be able to choose more the way we get our garbage done. Taxpayers are going to flee these monopolies and leave for less expensive municipalities.

I'm concerned that the province is trying to tell us how to spend our property taxes. I think we should, as residents of local municipalities, have some discretion over the spending of our money that's raised locally. You have every right as the provincial government to cut our transfer payments. I think that's perfectly fair. We're getting, what, \$50 million a year right now? Cut it off. No problem. But I don't think you have the right, the moral right, to take our residential taxes and dismantle our municipal local government that we chose and have nurtured to give us a good decision-making process for 160 years.

Let me talk for a moment about services. The main reasons that Pinchot and Roberts suggest that companies decentralize and break themselves apart is to provide better service. They give in those books hundreds and hundreds of examples of companies which get things to the customer in days instead of the weeks they were doing it in before. The best way to provide good planning is at the local level, where the community can tell people what they want. The people in Guildwood don't care what's happening on my local street in downtown Toronto. Why should they care about that?

I suggest that we involve the local politicians in making local decisions. It's the same thing with parking regulations. Things that work in the suburbs don't necessarily work downtown. I'm not sure we should be trying to force the same things to work everywhere. Standardization of all these bylaws, to me, doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Some of the things that I think should be dealt with at the local level are parking regulations, street repairs, service repairs of our pipes and sewers, local parks and recreation, animal control, fire protection services, building permits, heritage buildings.

All kinds of things are dealt with at the local level. Maybe even the cities right now are too big. But I don't think we should go to a higher level. Metro does not provide good decisions. They're not accessible to us. The bureaucrats are far too distant.

As an architect, I get approvals all over the province. The universal rule that I've come up with is that the smaller the municipality, the faster and the better the service. I get really rapid approvals in Welland and Lindsay. Toronto actually is not too bad, but you go to Mississauga and North York, they're terrible. I've had an application waiting for six months and they haven't even looked at it yet. The bureaucrats are remote. When I go to Metro to get something done it's like I don't matter. My project's only worth \$1 million and it just doesn't matter to them. When I have to come back to my client and say I can't get my approvals and the workmen are waiting to do the jobs and it's taking six months and a year to get decisions, it just doesn't work, doesn't make sense.

The most effective members of our city government are our elected representatives. They help us get access to the local government. They allow the government to talk to us. We get to talk to the committees. These local representatives work 12 and 14 hours a day, six days a week. They're not civil servants, but to me they're the most efficient service providers. They get the best quality out of the services that city provides.

The Chair: Mr Barnett, you've exhausted your 10 minutes. Thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.

JULIE BEDDOES

The Chair: Would Julie Beddoes please come forward? Welcome.

Ms Julie Beddoes: Mr Chair, members of the committee, my name is Julie Beddoes. I came to live in Toronto in 1966. My children grew up here; my grandchildren are growing up here. I've just bought an apartment in the Gooderham and Worts development and I hope to live here to the end of my days.

Whether one supports or opposes the amalgamation of all the municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto into one new city, certain provisions of Bill 103 appear to have been hastily prepared and in need of further examination and revision.

In particular, Bill 103 transfers to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, my MPP, and to his appointees the authority to overrule the decisions of duly elected municipal representatives and to establish the conditions and staff with which any new council will function, with no right of appeal even by recourse to the courts. Moreover, the bill provides no time limit on the exercise of these powers. Such a transfer of authority over the governance of what is now Metropolitan Toronto from elected representatives to a minister not elected on the understanding that he eventually hold that authority is contrary to conventional procedures in any democracy.

1750

First of all, "[T]he minister may," the bill says, but is not required to "dissolve the board of trustees," part III,

subsection 9(10), and "the transition team," part III, subsection 16(12). He may dissolve them one month after the transition year, but he's not obliged to. The bill even provides, in the event that he decides not to dissolve them, for the payment of their salaries and expenses during and after the transition year. If you'd like the part and subsection numbers, I've got them. If, therefore, the minister is displeased with the composition of the council elected in November 1997, he may subject it indefinitely to board and team.

The second point: The so-called transition team will have the authority to continue to perform the duties listed in part III, subsection 16(4), which include (a) the consideration of "what further legislation may be required to implement this act," and this could be going on into the next century, and "(b) consider whether restrictions should be imposed on the amounts the new city may raise and the amounts the new city and its local boards may spend in any year." How can we possibly vote for a new council in November and how can the people who stand for election possibly come before us without being able to give any kind of policy proposals at all, knowing that at any moment the minister's appointees can veto anything they suggest, any expenditure they propose? This is absurd.

The transition team is to establish the new city's basic organizational structure. It is to hire department heads and other employees. Thus, municipal elections to the new council will be virtually meaningless, as the minister is given by this bill the authority to prevent their fulfilling most of the usual functions of a municipal council.

Another point: Clause (i) of this subsection instructs the transition team to "carry out any other prescribed duties" — any other prescribed duties. What present or future ministers may choose to prescribe cannot be known, but it is clear that their appointees, rather than elected representatives, will have the authority to direct the affairs of the new city for an indefinite period if Bill 103 is passed.

While these extraordinary powers are granted to the trustees and transition team members and, through them, to the minister, at no time are they accountable to the population of the new city, either through the electoral process or through appeal to the courts. All of these provisions of Bill 103 are inconsistent with the fundamental principles of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.

Supporters of the bill claim that the neighbourhood committees would deal with what the Toronto Star on Saturday calls "strictly local issues." The bill, however, leaves quite unspecified what will be defined as a local issue or what is meant by "deal with."

If decisions made by duly elected councillors are to be subject, on the one hand, to the approval of the minister's appointees and, on the other, by elected neighbourhood committees, how does this reduce the complications and levels of government, let alone increase local government accountability? I must say that I am getting rather sick of the rhetoric, buzzwords, waffly, vaguely nice-sounding words like "common sense," "accountability," "accessibility." They're wonderful words. You can always say them, but nobody really knows what they mean. They don't

bind you to anything in particular. It's like sweet music behind a cigarette ad. It sort of creates the mood, but it doesn't bind anybody to anything, and I certainly noticed a lot of those words in the minister's presentation this morning.

If the neighbourhood committees are to have no more than an advisory role, with no executive authority or budgets — and I doubt if the council's going to be able to afford to give them much of a budget — what sort of role can they play that would make it worthwhile for anyone not an agent of ministerial policy to serve on them? Whether they are further instruments of ministerial direction or ineffectual talking shops, they can only serve to increase the disaffection and cynicism of the public toward the whole governmental process.

I am coming near the end of my time, so I'll hurry with my next section, which is on the vague, confusing and contradictory provisions for neighbourhood services in the bill. They're only mentioned twice. At one point in part II, the bill says, "The city council shall, by bylaw, establish neighbourhood committees and determine their functions." They're not mentioned again until part III, which says, "The transition team shall...hold public consultation on, (i) the functions to be assigned to neighbourhood committees and the method of choosing their members." There is no indication of what public consultations might consist of and no time is specified by which the committees may be in place. The bill allows their establishment to be indefinitely delayed.

No procedure is specified in case the policy of the council responsible for establishing the neighbourhood committees does not meet the approval of the transition team or the minister. On one thing the bill is specific: Neighbourhood committees are to be chosen by persons unspecified, not elected.

In conclusion, I claim that Bill 103 contains nothing that would prevent the new city from being run indefinitely by the minister through his appointees. The extent to which the government is willing to take into account the expressed wishes of citizens has been made clear in their response to the forthcoming municipal referendum. For all these reasons, I urge the committee to recommend that the government of Ontario withdraw this bill and instead, hold municipal elections in November 1997 under the existing act, with the addition of a referendum question asking whether the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto wish a bill providing for the amalgamation of the municipalities to be prepared. If the answer were yes, there would then be an appropriate length of time before the next municipal election for the contents of the bill to be examined, discussed and amended, according to customary parliamentary procedures.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. You have used up your 10 minutes. I extend our appreciation to you for coming forward.

We will stand recessed until after the vote in the House.

The committee recessed from 1757 to 1808.

JACQUELINE LATTER

The Chair: Would Jacqueline Latter please come forward. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

You'll have 10 minutes today to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit.

Ms Jacqueline Latter: I can hardly hear you because of all the noise. I'm sure once I sit down I can hear you.

The Chair: Order, please, gentlemen.

Ms Latter: Thank you very much. I'm not a politician and I'm not a speech-maker, so you're not going to hear great eloquence from me. What you're going to hear is a straight-from-the-heart emotional reaction to this dreadfully undemocratic bill that's being proposed.

I've lived here for 27 years. When I first came here, the Spadina Expressway, which I'm sure all of you will remember, was a major issue. It was the first point at which I realized how powerful community groups could be in preserving things specifically for their community. It's there that I would like to begin.

I've always been incredibly impressed that in Toronto I can walk into my local city councillor's or Metro councillor's office at almost any time of the day or I can phone in and actually talk to a person, very often the elected representative. I can't imagine what's going to happen under the new so-called megacity if that goes through. I don't know if any of you have ever tried to deal with large bureaucracies, but I don't think they're as receptive in any way. There will be voice mail and there will be returned calls that will go to other people's voice mails and there will be telephone tag played, but you won't have the face-to-face contact we enjoy now with our local elected politicians.

I don't understand the logic of the megacity. In all the reports I've read and all the figures that have been thrown out, I don't see any demonstrated evidence that there's going to be any cost saving at all; in fact, I've seen the opposite demonstrated from other countries' research, where this type of megacity proposal has resulted in more expense rather than less expense to the local taxpayers.

I'm offended by this government's response to the proposed referendum. The notion that people want to hold a referendum on an issue that's so important being met with, "We don't really care about your referendum and we're not really going to listen to it; you can hold it anyway, but it doesn't matter to us," is unbelievable to me in a democratic country. The word "dictatorship" comes to mind over and over and over again when I think of these kinds of statements and what's happening in Bill 103.

I heard the previous speaker talk about the trustees that have been appointed. I agree with everything that was said by that previous speaker. Trustees are normally appointed when a bankruptcy situation is facing people. As far as I'm aware, none of the municipalities in Metro Toronto are facing that situation. To think that the democratically elected officials I and other people elected in this city have now had their powers stripped from them is again unbelievable to me. The fact that these trustees were able to meet with city bureaucrats is unbelievable to me. Why is my democratically elected politician not able to have any say in this process? Why are their democratically elected powers completely ignored in this process?

I'm the chair of an advisory council of a community centre in the city of Toronto. It causes me great concern that under the new megacity there may be no funding at all for these community centres to continue the way they have done, there may be no avenue for citizens like me to participate in the decision-making process at the community level, and there may be no more communities under the proposals this government is trying to bring in.

I'm a parent of two children in the Toronto school board, and I can't help but make the connection to Bill 104. I see these two bills as being completely interrelated. I see them as an attempt by this government to have a huge power grab and tax grab at the expense of the citizens of the Metropolitan Toronto area, and it's absolutely unconscionable. As I said before, there is no demonstrated evidence that there will be substantial, if any, cost saving in any of this, so why are you throwing us into complete chaos?

Citizens are going to the polls in November of this year to elect another municipal government of some sort. I wonder what powers these people are going to have in light of what the previous speaker said about the trustees who have been appointed to oversee almost everything at the city level.

Again I use the word "dictatorship." I don't use it lightly. I think you have to really reconsider what you're doing. You are a democratically elected government. Hopefully you can be democratically unelected the next provincial go-round. Hopefully you might see sense after listening to all the speakers over the next few weeks and consider withdrawing this dreadful piece of legislation.

The Chair: Thank you. We have about three minutes for questions from the Liberal caucus.

Mr Colle: Thank you, Ms Latter. How do you see community involvement being jeopardized with the megacity? You made the comment that you're afraid the type of community involvement you're involved in, the advisory council you sit on, might be jeopardized. Could you explain how that fear is more than just a notion.

Ms Latter: That community involvement is dependent on people having access to their locally elected, democratically elected representative. If that person has a responsibility for a greater number of people than they already have now, I don't imagine there will be that type of accessibility we now enjoy. I cannot imagine, under the megacity proposal, how any of this will be able to be accomplished the way we accomplish it at the local level. As an advisory council, we're able to meet with our locally elected politicians any time we want.

Mr Colle: In terms of this new government, this megacity government they're creating, people have talked about the trusteeship. The previous speaker was quite articulate in explaining that the trusteeship is the first phase of overseeing, or whatever you want to call it, local government. The second phase is going to be this transition team. This transition team is going to be able to hire department heads, hire staff and be in place indefinitely at the discretion of the minister. Do you think this transition team and its power over the new council will lead to that council having any kind of real autonomy or independence to deal with advisory groups or to deal independently from Queen's Park?

Ms Latter: To me, this transition team represents a complete undermining of the democratic process in the same way that the so-called Education Improvement Commission under Bill 104 is being appointed. These people are going to oversee all the decision-making that the locally elected politicians should be making and were elected to make.

Mr Gerretsen: There's an awful lot of doubletalk going on here about these neighbourhood committees and exactly what they're going to do. If you read the minister's statement from this morning, at one point he says they'll be able to tell their representatives on city council what they think local priorities should be and the people will be directly involved in making those decisions. He goes on to say they'll make local decision-making possible. Then he goes on further and says councillors will carry those local priorities with them when they sit down at the city council meetings.

It seems to me that he can't have it both ways. Either these local neighbourhood committees will be getting some real power or they're not getting any power. Unless we clearly define what they're going to do — and I don't think that's anywhere in the legislation at all — they won't have any direct say at all in how their neighbourhoods will be managed or looked after.

Ms Latter: I don't believe they can have any power without the power of the locally elected politician. This will sound disrespectful, but it's intended to be: Quite frankly, I don't have any faith in anything any of the ministers of this government have to say because they contradict each other on a constant basis.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation today.

Before we recess for the dinner hour, just a note that the subcommittee will meet at 9 o'clock in room 110. Thank you. We'll recess till 7 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1818 to 1902.

PETER TABUNS

The Chair: Welcome to the evening session of the standing committee on general government on the City of Toronto Act. Our next deputant is Peter Tabuns. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit.

Mr Peter Tabuns: Good evening, everyone. As the Chair has said, my name is Peter Tabuns. I'm the chair of the Toronto board of health and I represent Ward 8 in Toronto, the Riverdale area. I wanted to let you know, having done a lot of door-to-door work and phone canvassing in my ward, that the overwhelming majority of my constituents are opposed to this legislation you're bringing forward, not only Bill 103 but the whole megapackage that comes with it.

I am pleased, of course, that you are holding hearings. Hundreds of requests have come in and I understand you haven't even advertised yet for these hearings. I expect many hundreds more will want to appear before you. I want to add my voice to what I think you'll find is a growing chorus of outrage around this issue.

There's a great deal to say about this piece of legislation and I don't think much of it is polite. It's been

described in various ways as "odious," "brutal," "stupid" and "just plain bad." I find that it's exhausting people's vocabulary as well as their patience, certainly mine.

I have to ask myself, where did this legislation come from? From the back of an envelope, from a dinner napkin, or was it Mr Leach exorcising a persistent nightmare? I know that you as legislators have gone through a variety of hoops to get where you are now and so I can't believe that you think this is a good idea, or was ever a good idea.

Even your own Conservative Party task force on Metro government back in 1994 concluded that the "government closest to the people is the most efficient, responsive and accountable." That sure isn't the megacity legislation you're dealing with at this point. Mr Leach was on that Conservative Party task force. I have to ask, what has changed in the past three years? I don't think the change is in the cities or in Metro Toronto itself. I think the change is in Mr Leach.

Just before the 1995 provincial election, Mike Harris went on record with the taxpayers federation saying that once he was elected he would not eliminate local municipalities and transfer their responsibilities to regional governments. Again I have to ask myself, what changed? I think the answer is: Mr Harris got elected.

I also say to myself, aren't you, the Conservative Party, the people who are always going on about big government being more expensive and less competitive? Even your own rhetoric doesn't support this legislation because the reality is you're creating a very big government, bigger than most provinces, a government that will open the door to very significant spending, something I thought was of concern to your administration. In fact, many experts agree on that analysis.

Wendell Cox, a consultant on international public policy, tells us that in the United States the unit costs of large amalgamated governments tend to move to the highest levels of the pre-existing municipalities. Sometimes they go more than 100% higher. These municipalities may not have the same services as we do in Metro Toronto, but whatever their services, it's clear they cost one heck of a lot more after amalgamation than they did before.

But you don't even have to look as far as the United States to look at the costs that come with amalgamation. Reports out of Halifax, where amalgamation is less than a year old, tell us it's already costing \$18 million more than expected. You have to ask yourself, don't you think the people of Halifax wish they could go back and invest a mere \$1 million now in a referendum to reject what was imposed on them?

The fact is, and I think you know it, that a megacity will certainly cost more. You also know that the municipalities of Metro Toronto are required by law to operate within a balanced budget and are streamlined to the bone. There are no costly overlaps, notwithstanding the steady barrage of media attacks on local government.

Services such as police, ambulance and transit are already amalgamated across the metropolitan area because that's the best way to operate them. Services such as public health are delivered by each separate municipality because that's the best way to make them effective. Even

your own KPMG study only claims actual amalgamation savings of, at most, 2% to 3% of total spending of all amalgamated cities. I think that's something worth looking at. The amalgamation itself is not eliminating large amounts of duplication because there are not large amounts of duplication there.

I'm sure you've heard that last year, 1996, *Fortune* magazine named Toronto the number one international city for business and living. I'm sure I'm not the first person who's said that to you and I'm sure in the course of these hearings I won't be the last. But the reality is that the city of Toronto and the cities within Metro are regularly noted internationally for their success as urban centres. So I have to ask, what's the problem? There's an old saying that if something's not broken, don't fix it. You folks seem to think that if something's not broken, in this case you'd better break it, especially when it comes to Toronto.

All the ugly trappings of this bill — the trustees, the megacity council, the sweeping powers — are designed for one purpose only: to keep the people of Toronto away from the decisions that affect their lives, to make them powerless so that this provincial government can bleed our city to death. That is the outcome of the package you've brought forward. That death will come in the form of downloading social assistance, child care, housing, public health, long-term care and so on, on to the municipal tax base.

I think the megacity will make all this possible. The megacity functions as a Trojan Horse. It brings in a package of goods that will destroy that city from within. It's argued that the megacity will make things operate more efficiently, give us the tax room to cover these downloaded expenses. That simply is not the reality.

You're in a position, though, where it's no longer your problem. You can pass on this burden of funding huge amounts of essential services to municipal taxpayers even if they're old and on a fixed income or struggling to make ends meet on a small income. The lower their income, the bigger the blow. Unfortunately, we've come to the conclusion that your government doesn't care, you don't care, because it will make it possible for you to pass on a 30% tax cut to the big income earners. The higher their income, the bigger the tax break. Your scheme is one of the more creative income redistribution schemes: Tax the poor to give to the rich.

1910

If people complain — and believe me they'll complain; they aren't going to roll over and play dead; they aren't going to be silent; they will be complaining — you're in a position to say: "Sorry, it's not our problem any more. Talk to your municipal councillor. And by the way, he or she represents 50,000 other people, so good luck."

The megacity means all gain for the provincial government and no pain for the Tory government and its friends. But let me remind you of who will take the pain — I'll pick one item and that's long-term care — the very people who need the service most and are least able to pay for it through their property taxes: seniors and people with disabilities. Is this common sense? It certainly isn't common decency.

It's nothing less than obscene to download the increasing costs of long-term care on to an aging population. In only five years the number of seniors in Metro is projected to be 30%. Most of them will be people over age 85 who are likely to need the greatest amount of care. With all the other downloaded services competing for limited dollars, dollars that will become even more limited as business flees from tax increases to cover service costs, how are all the seniors who need care going to get it? How are all the people who have been released from hospital after a day or two going to get care? How are the people with serious or terminal diseases going to get care?

You know perfectly well that the long-term-care system, with all these pressures, is going to collapse. You have to ask yourselves, is this your problem? Perhaps you think it isn't. I think, if that's your perspective, you have to think again. Many of you live here, perhaps permanently, perhaps part of the time. You can't hide from the problem. You'll see it in your communities, you'll see it in your apartment building, you'll see it with the people down the street. If you figure the problem can be solved by privatizing long-term care to make it cheaper, just remember that cheaper service is certainly what you'll get, but not cheap enough to be covered by your 30% tax cut, because once you've decimated good, public, not-for-profit care, you'll never be able to buy it back on your own.

As a councillor for the city of Toronto and chair of the Toronto board of health, I deplore the megacity legislation because it will sacrifice the quality of life of this fine city and it will sacrifice the wellbeing of its residents to what I see as a senseless, corporatist ideology.

The 2.3 million residents of this great metropolitan area are quite capable of deciding what kind of city they want, and I am sure it is not the megacity. I'm joining with them in saying get rid of Bill 103 and get rid of the downloading mega-package that comes with it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Tabuns, for your presentation. You've used up your entire 10 minutes. I want to thank you for coming forward this evening to make your presentation to the committee.

SHEILA BROWN

The Chair: Would Sheila Brown please come forward. Good evening. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit.

Ms Sheila Brown: My name is Sheila Brown. I'm a former public health nurse in North York and I am very unhappy about this megacity bill as well.

Premier Harris states that he's trying to strengthen downtown Toronto, not weaken it. I quote: "We want the same things that the board of trade wants, that the people of Toronto want: We want a strong Toronto." This bill will definitely not accomplish this goal.

After the passage of the omnibus bill a year ago, the Premier admitted that many MPPs voted for Bill 26 without understanding its implications or even having read and discussed all its details. Now the Legislature is asked to blindly pass a bill which fundamentally changes the structure of the six cities in Metro without having any

documentation or studies of its impact on the lives of their constituents. There is plenty of evidence in large US cities — New York, Chicago, Los Angeles — that shows there is no efficiency in cities with populations over a million. Research demonstrates that municipal amalgamations do not save money either in the USA or in Canada.

Trustees and their power: The appointment of trustees to oversee the financial decisions of the duly elected councils is an odious aspect of this bill. Trustees are usually appointed when a municipality has mismanaged its financial affairs, is bankrupt or has committed some major error. In this case, trustees have been imposed on our elected councils that have committed none of the above. This is totally unacceptable, as are the broad powers given the trustees. The fact that they are solely responsible to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and that their costs are to be paid by the municipalities adds insult to the lack of democratic process.

The trampling of democratic principles contained in this act is breathtaking and is only exceeded by the power grab contained in the omnibus bill. This government was never given a mandate to create a megacity. There was nothing in the Common Sense Revolution that indicated this was in the offing, let alone that it would be pushed so precipitously through the Legislature. If this bill is passed, it will have deleterious effects not only on the citizens of the Metro area but on all of the province and perhaps Canada.

By downloading the costs of social services, long-term care and public health as well as the usual municipal services — sewers, roads, policing and firefighting — there will be an unfair burden placed on the municipal taxpayers of Metro. What will happen to the economy, the manufacturing sector and businesses such as real estate, when the impact of this is felt through spiralling taxes and increased costs to businesses and residents of Metro? User fees and decreased services will be the result.

The costs of public health, social services, social housing, and long-term care do not belong at the local level. These require provincial standards to ensure that all citizens of the province have equal access to services. The Crombie report made that clear, yet the government has chosen to ignore its own expert advice, paid for by the taxpayers of the province, and the report now gathers dust.

What are the remedies? Withdraw the bill. Rethink the plan with consultation from the people involved. Reorganization of services can occur without amalgamation. Save the costs of transition and the cost of the trustees. Keep the local governments, which are providing cost-effective, efficient and accountable services in a city deemed the most liveable in North America.

The ramifications of Bill 103 will result in decreased services and increased costs. The users of social services, long-term care, public health and social housing will be the losers. Once again this government brings new meaning to the phrase "Women and children first."

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. You've left about four minutes for questions.

Mr Marchese: We are dealing here with the amalgamation issue alone, because that's what the bill speaks to.

Sadly, the dumping of all the other services — child care, housing, welfare, long-term care and public health — is all linked to this. Although some people would love us to separate the two issues, in my mind they are now inseparably linked. I don't think it's possible to talk about one without linking it to the other.

The Tories argue that urban life will be improved, that we will have many more jobs, we'll be stronger and democracy will continue. But a number of speakers who have already spoken talked about why none of those things appear to be true in their minds. Is it your sense that once we amalgamate and once we pass on these other services, somehow the quality of your life will be improved?

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Ms Brown: I don't think the quality of anyone's life is going to be improved. The fact that the municipal tax base is the most regressive kind of tax that we can have and that our population is aging at a very rapid rate means that, as a previous speaker said, there's going to be a great deal of need for long-term care, for care for the elderly, and we don't have enough social housing as it is. If we have to pick up all these costs, these are going to be increased in the future and they will be dumped on the local taxpayer, who is increasingly less able to carry them. Since there's only one taxpayer altogether, I think it's totally unfair.

Besides that, one of the things that really worries me is, for instance, public health. Public health is supposed to have provincial standards. If the provincial government does not pay for any of the services that public health provides, how can you possibly enforce provincial standards? Are we going to have the same level of service in Toronto as they have in Kingston or in Peterborough or somewhere else? It will be impossible. Right now there's a 75%-25% split in the funding of public health. The province pays 75% and the municipalities pay 25% in those areas outside Metro. If the areas outside Metro have to pay 100%, how are they going to employ the health inspectors or how are we going to ensure that our water is safe or that communicable disease and so on will be followed?

Mr Marchese: We're certainly raising all those questions, and many are raising those questions. I want to ask you one other question before we run out of time. Outside of Metro, people are able to determine their own fate about whether they amalgamate or how. Mike Harris and his gang have decided that here in Metro we don't really deserve to have that right. I'm offended by it. Do you have an opinion around that?

Ms Brown: I'm certainly offended by it too. That's why I will work very hard to get people to understand the issues in the upcoming referendum.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Marchese. You still have about a minute, if you want.

Mr Marchese: One of the other questions I'm very concerned about has to do with our ability to have genuine democracy. Some journalists and others argue — the Toronto Star editorial: "We're going to continue to have democracy, don't you worry. We're going to elect 44 Metro councillors in this new amalgamated city and so all of you will be able to have a say, so why are you fretting

about that?" I'm a bit concerned about that. I think you probably have a feeling around that.

Ms Brown: I'm concerned because who is going to be able to afford to run as a councillor when you have to represent 50,000 people? Who is going to be able to afford to run as mayor when one mailing to 2.3 million people will cost half a million dollars? When you start reducing your representation, you start getting less democracy; there's no doubt about that. When you increase the number of people you represent, how can you represent them fairly?

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Brown, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee this evening.

JANE MARSLAND

The Chair: Would Jane Marsland please come forward. Good evening, Ms Marsland.

Ms Jane Marsland: Just for your information, I have lived in downtown Toronto for 25 years and I passionately love this city. I would like to thank the members of the Legislature for giving me this opportunity to express my concerns about Bill 103, which will put the seven municipal councils in Metropolitan Toronto under trusteeship and thus, as far as I'm concerned, temporarily end local democracy while it creates one new municipal council for all 2.5 million residents of Metro Toronto effective January 1, 1998.

I understand that Bill 103 also states that the new council may not overturn staff appointments or other decisions made by the provincial appointees and that none of the decisions of the transition team may be challenged in court. As well, Bill 103 gives the Minister of Municipal Affairs complete power to make any regulations he deems necessary to impose on the councils.

I must say I have profound concerns about Bill 103 and the autocratic nature of its implementation. It has always been my understanding that representative democracy is a process — not just the right to vote every three or four years, but a process whereby the elected representatives of the people maintain their legitimacy through debate with and the active participation of the citizens. Just because a government receives a mandate in the course of an election does not mean it has the right to impose arbitrary measures on a confused or reluctant citizenry. Certainly major changes in governance require the input of citizens.

From what I have been able to glean from the newspapers and other news media, one of the government's reasons for the introduction of Bill 103 is to save money, to make Toronto more cost-effective. In order to save money, our representation in municipal government will be cut from 108 representatives to 44. This and the arbitrary nature of Bill 103 must mean that democracy itself is now too expensive. I wonder if the people who have died and continue to die fighting to gain or save democracy would also consider it too expensive.

A vital city is an enormously complex organism which depends on great diversity, strong civic institutions and the active participation of its citizens in the democratic tradition of due process and consultation to ensure its

survival. It seems to me incredibly daunting to ask 44 people to take on the immensely increased responsibilities of a megacity for the delivery of not only hard services such as water, sewers, fire, policing, garbage collection, transit, the arts, regulatory planning etc, but now as well responsibilities for welfare, social housing, long-term care for the elderly and many other social services.

The citizens of a large city require enough decision-makers to ensure that local issues and problems are dealt with by someone who intimately knows the area and its unique characteristics. If the local issues get lost in the totality of one large government, local participatory democracy is at risk. Once the concerns of the big government override the local issues, people will begin to lose hope that their concerns will be listened to and will withdraw from the political process.

A few months ago, I read a couple of interesting books on urban affairs. One was called *Here's the Deal* by Ross Miller. It's an account of political corruption in Chicago. The other was *City for Sale: Ed Koch and the Betrayal of New York*, by Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett. So I read with interest in the *Globe and Mail* the other day that both these cities were being used as good examples of the way Toronto should be governed. My reading of these two books led me to believe that corrupt practices take hold in a city because of too few politicians with too much power. A vigilant public with ready access to their politicians seems to me a better way to ensure financial effectiveness and accountability.

I know there are provisions in Bill 103 for advisory bodies, but it has been my experience on such advisory bodies that without any real responsibilities and authority to make decisions, advisory bodies can't solve problems and they just waste a lot of time.

I know that the government has already stated that it does not care what I think, that it will go ahead with what it believes is the only solution, that Bill 103 is the right answer to the problem. I believe, however, that the longer we focus all our attention on trying to come up with the right answer, to get it right the first time, the more fearful we as a society will become. What if we don't get it right? What if our problems don't disappear? What if things get worse? When we are so fearful of making a mistake, all our creativity ceases. Only fear and struggle persist, and paradoxically, we continue to make bigger mistakes.

We are paralysing ourselves as a society for fear of getting things wrong. I firmly believe that as long as people are fearful, they will not spend money. It's carefree people who spend money. I believe that even with the tax break, an economic turnaround won't happen until people feel confident. People will only start to feel confident when they are brought honestly into the democratic process.

It's very difficult to even comment on what the implications of a megacity may be when there are so many unknowns. I work in the arts and I know from experience that the only way to bring something new into the world is by having a vision which can be seen literally in the inner eye, communicated to others and felt by others as a vision. Everything else springs from this: the people, the timing, the resources, the production, right to the

moment the curtain rises. As a result of this, people can understand the wholeness of the project, make creative suggestions and inspire others to join.

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I find it difficult to be asked to willingly give up on a city structure that, as far as I am concerned, is working very well and is obviously working well enough to be noted by influential magazines as the best city in North America in which to live, with absolutely no compelling vision of the new city to compare it to, just the constant refrain that it will cost less money, although this too seems to be in wide dispute.

I would not like you to think I oppose change. Everything is constantly changing all the time; even change changes. But it is also a process, a constant process of discovery and creation. As scientists have discovered and as artists have always known, fuzzy, messy, continuously exploring systems bent on discovering what works are far more practical and successful than any attempts at managed efficiency and control.

As I mentioned earlier, I work in a not-for-profit performing arts sector. The impact of amalgamation, along with the downloading of the costs for social services, could have a devastating effect on the arts, especially the small to mid-sized arts organizations, which have been built up with two levels of municipal funding. As this sector is already reeling from the cuts from all other government levels and is now in an extremely fragile state, a precipitous cut at the municipal level will cause many, if not most, to cease to exist, and I hope you will bear in mind that it is these organizations that are the backbone of the creation of Canadian works of art.

Local government belongs to and should be responsible to the local citizens who elected it and, therefore, I oppose Bill 103, which imposes amalgamation on the cities of Metropolitan Toronto. I also strongly oppose downloading the costs of social programs on to property taxes, which should properly be funded through the large base of tax revenues from income, corporate and sales taxes. As a person of very limited financial means, I intend to fight hard to maintain my roles, rights and responsibilities as a citizen and not to allow myself to become a mere consumer of privatized services.

The Chair: You've effectively used most of your 10 minutes. I appreciate your coming forward today to make a presentation to the committee.

ANNE FARQUHARSON

The Chair: Anne Farquharson, please. Good evening. Welcome to the committee. Go ahead.

Mrs Anne Farquharson: My name is Anne Farquharson. I've lived in Toronto for 36 years, raised my family here, watched as the place grew from a provincial town to a city among the world's great cities. I love the place, and that's why I feel obliged to stand up for Toronto when it's threatened. The threat that brings me here this evening is Bill 103, introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in December, to abolish Metro Toronto and its six constituent municipalities in order to reconstitute a single megacity.

I was dismayed that something as important and radically different as this was brought out just before the holidays, when people were too preoccupied to take notice of it, disappointed too that the minister was sufficiently contemptuous of the people of the city that he did not plan to take the time to hold public hearings on the bill. May I express my gratitude now for the change in heart that is allowing me and other terrified citizens a few minutes each to bring our concerns about this bill before our government.

My primary concern is on account of the threat to democracy in its provisions. I had to read a copy of the bill for myself before I could believe that the provincial government had actually abrogated the authority of my elected representative on Toronto city council, putting him under the control of three provincially appointed trustees, treating him as though he were not able to carry out the functions he was elected to perform or as though he were a part of a corporate body that is guilty of some sort of mismanagement requiring that he be subject to the control of a board of trustees who must scrutinize and give their prior approval for every act of importance in the governance of the city of Toronto for the next 12 months.

The provincial government has no mandate from the people to disempower our elected local government in this rather brutal and certainly undemocratic way, nor has it produced evidence of any expert advice that has counselled in favour of this kind of action. It's precisely in this way that democracies become vitiated by the reckless use of power unchecked by any general debate or thoughtful advice.

But the board of trustees is only one sign of the disdain for democracy in Bill 103. Even more terrifying is the transition team which is to be appointed later in the year by the cabinet with full authority to conduct next November's municipal election, to determine boundaries and structures of the proposed megacity wards, to second employees of the municipalities to do their will. This transition team will be paid for out of Metro funds but is accountable only to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It will be completely insulated from any proceedings for damages or questioning of decisions in the courts, and it is expected to remain in place until at least January 31, 1998, and may continue beyond that date at the discretion of the cabinet.

I would have thought that a municipal government would need to be shown in flagrant dereliction of its duties or in dire financial straits to become subject to this sort of imposition of an authority accountable only to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. How can this government explain to me why my duly elected city council is to be put under the control of a group of provincially appointed people, with names that I don't know, who are declared to be outside the purview of the law? This is not democratic. This cannot be good.

What is the rationale for this rush to create a megacity? The proponents of amalgamation have offered only one argument in favour, that it would save money, and this argument has been challenged by many academic studies, most recently by Wendell Cox Consultancy,

which convincingly makes the case that costs go up dramatically in cities exceeding a million people. Against this deeply flawed argument based on presumed efficiencies in amalgamation, what we as citizens have to lose thereby is access to the human-scale local government that has been an integral part of our lives and the essential bedrock of every true democracy.

It is true that times are changing, and Toronto in 1997 finds itself at the heart of a greatly expanded, populous region so that new ways need to be found to coordinate services and facilitate partnership activities and allow for experiments with different solutions to problems throughout the 416 and 905 regions. But no one has made a good argument for an amalgamated Toronto as the best structure for adapting to change. In fact it will be too big to work cooperatively with the municipalities in the 905 region, and also too big to answer to the street-level needs of its constituents. Perhaps it is the Metro level of government which should be transformed into a greater Toronto area services board so that municipalities within 416 and 905 areas would sit together to coordinate regional services.

In any case, I am here to remind the government that citizens want to be consulted about changes in our governing structures. On March 3, the people will be speaking to this government through the referendum on amalgamation. I hope you will be listening then, and I thank you for listening now to some of my concerns about Bill 103.

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The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Farquharson. You have about three minutes left. Will you entertain some questions from the government caucus?

Mrs Farquharson: I'd be happy to.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you very much, Mrs Farquharson, for your presentation. I just wanted to quickly go to the issue of democracy and the trustees to oversee the operations of the councils of the present municipalities for the coming year, to scrutinize the budget and to look at the budget of the first new council, but mostly to deal with the councils that are presently in existence.

One of the concerns, of course, that one would have is that the councils, upon realizing that they are going to be amalgamated, for some reason may decide they should do something with their assets and liabilities to benefit certain municipalities as opposed to the benefit of the larger group as they're amalgamated.

Do you see any possible way that we could deal with that other than those trustees to oversee it? I guess I would suggest one of the newspaper articles said something about one of the city councils — and I don't remember which one — but one of them suggesting they should find a way to put the city hall into a non-profit corporation so the new amalgamated city would not have those assets at their disposal. That, of course, would not be of benefit to any of the citizens.

Mr Gerretsen: What do you think they are going to do with it, Ernie?

Mrs Farquharson: I guess what you're suggesting is a very deep level of distrust between two levels of government. I would just suggest that I have a great sense

of trust in the people who are representing me at city hall, and I don't know why you should distrust them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Farquharson, for coming forward and making your presentation today.

ROBERT FARQUHARSON

The Chair: Could I have Robert Farquharson please come forward. Good evening, sir. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Robert Farquharson: I feel sorry for you people. You're going be listening to a number of things over and over again tonight and in the next few days. On the other hand, that's an inevitable consequence of a piece of legislation that has such egregious errors, weaknesses and faults in it, and I think the government side at least have brought this on themselves. So while I feel sorry for you, it's only to a certain extent.

The other thing I'll say is that at least each presentation is going to be individual because for my part at least, and I suspect on the part of most of the people you have heard tonight, it comes from the heart.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you tonight. First, I want to make clear where I'm coming from. I'm not a municipal politician, I'm not a municipal employee, and my house is fully assessed at market value and fully taxed, I assure you. I'm not trying to defend myself in any way.

I enjoy this city as it is now and I fear very much that Bill 103 will destroy it, or at least much that is enjoyable about it. When I first read Bill 103, a quote from Shakespeare came to my mind and I couldn't get rid of it. It's Hamlet soliloquizing on the precipitate remarriage of his mother: "O, most wicked speed, to post with such dexterity to incestuous sheets."

To declare a bill such as 103 without warning either in your — I'm speaking to the government side — pre-election promises or in the Legislature beforehand, to declare it retroactive to December 17 and then to require that it pass by the end of February — thank God at least that has been amended a bit — but to declare a bill with such far-reaching and unknown consequences with such impetuous haste is indeed posting with wicked speed to incestuous sheets.

Moreover, introducing the bill, unexpected and unannounced, at the Christmas season leads inevitably to the cynical suspicion that someone is trying to sweep something through behind our backs. Add to that the dictatorial and anti-democratic aspects of the process: The rights and responsibilities of our elected representatives are taken from them and vested in a board of trustees and a transition team appointed by the minister.

I really needn't say all of this; you know it all, don't you? The final decisions of staffing, of hiring contracts and all the financial decisions shall not be reviewed or questioned by the court. Nor shall the two agencies be subject — that is, the board of trustees or the transitional team — to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act. The main purpose of this act, in my understanding, is to require that any tribunal that exercises statutory powers be subject to, and act in accord with, the laws of natural justice, and the transitional team and the board of trustees are not to be subject, apparently, to the laws of natural justice.

Then consider the means used to persuade the public of the good in this bill: \$100,000 for a very doubtful study, \$300,000 for a mailing list that was judged in contempt of Parliament, faxes that contravene federal regulations. If your cause is so good, why does it stink so badly in all of these things I've just outlined to you? What I see in the process — undue haste, cynical timing, autocratic appointments, dictatorial powers — these things make me very suspicious of the bill itself.

When I look at the bill, I find good reason for those suspicions. The ostensible reason for amalgamation is that it will improve efficiency and save money. Yet nowhere has the government given us any argument to back up these reasons. The KPMG study, the one study that suggests there may be some savings in amalgamation, is very tentative. I know of no study that demonstrates where efficiencies will occur and how much they will save, or for that matter, how much they will cost.

Over against the lack of information from the government side we have the Crombie report, which begins and ends by saying that amalgamation of Metro without the simultaneous and coordinated introduction of a greater Toronto council board would be "absolutely the worst action that could be taken." There's also the Wendell Cox report that shows urban municipalities with more than one million inhabitants cost 21% more to run than municipalities of 500,000 inhabitants. There is no argument in any of this for what the Ontario government is trying to do.

There may be some aspects of Metro's operations which would benefit from amalgamation. The fact is that much of what would benefit from amalgamation is already amalgamated or is on the way to being amalgamated or could be readily amalgamated without the wholesale destruction of local government. If there are other aspects of municipal government which imperatively require amalgamation for the sake of economy or efficiency, I challenge you to show us where they are. I challenge you to show reasons for pushing amalgamation in this high-handed way. Show us the backing material which justifies Bill 103.

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Till you do that, we can only assume that there is a hidden agenda that has nothing to do with economies or efficiencies, that there is an undisclosed reason for some other purpose. Actually, I suspect we've seen that hidden agenda already. Until you show me otherwise, I further suspect that it has more to do with saving money for the provincial government than for the taxpayer of Toronto.

Until the public sees good reason for what you are doing, we can only fear that Bill 103 will replace locally responsible and locally responsive governments with a remote and ruinously expensive bureaucracy. On the way, there will be confusion confounded and chaos unimaginable. You've already seen what happens when so-called cost-saving procedures are undertaken without sufficient study and planning. I refer to the fiasco of the child support program, where husbands paid in their support money and wives waited two months to get it. This is an example that should be studied before anything is hastened any more than it's hastened already.

I sense this government's going to have its way regardless of what the people think. You've as much as told us that already. It reminds me of the Brecht poem, "If the electorate gets in your way, abolish it and elect a new one."

My final word is this: I plead with you, set aside your arrogance, your absolute conviction that you know what is right for us. Listen with some humility to the members of the public like myself who take the time to appear before you. And for God's sake, consider that you may be wrong.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs Julia Munro): Thank you very much, Mr Farquharson. We have a moment now for one quick question from the Liberals.

Mr Colle: Mr Farquharson, thank you for your eloquence. I think you've brought to light something that's hidden deep in this legislation. Not only is the trusteeship above the law in imposing its will over the municipally elected officials, but you've got this transition team now that is able to hire people, and these people even talk about their retirement plans, they have to be part of the retirement plans, and the city is bound by the resulting employment contract.

It really begs the question: What kind of independence will this new mega-government have? How will they ever be anything but a puppet government of the provincial government? The transition team itself, as you said, isn't even subject to the natural laws of justice in terms of how it operates. So in terms of an imposition of an autocratic regime, it's not even now with the trusteeship; the transition team in the future will do this. So you're getting a double dose —

The Vice-Chair: Mr Colle —

Mr Colle: Whatever, okay.

The Vice-Chair: There's just time to hear the answer.

Mr Farquharson: Mr Colle, you've made the point that there will be a long legacy, from either the transition team or the board of trustees, of incapability passed on to the new government, whatever form it takes, and of course we know nothing about that. If one is suspicious about —

The Vice-Chair: I must ask you to wind up your answer, please. We're running out of time.

Mr Farquharson: Very briefly, then, if there's suspicion on the part of the government about what the present municipal governments might do in the meantime and therefore a need for a transition team, as was suggested earlier, then surely there's some need for similar restrictions in the actions of the transition team and the board of trustees.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for being here this evening.

MARILYN ROY

The Vice-Chair: I'd like Marilyn Roy to come forward. Good evening, Ms Roy.

Ms Marilyn Roy: I am here tonight, as everyone else is, to address my concerns to you about Bill 103. It appears to be a simple response to a complex problem which in the end will satisfy no one. A megacity will reduce accessibility and will fail to take into account the uniqueness of each city and its planning solutions.

There has been no real business case for efficiencies to support cost savings. But what, you may ask, gives me the credibility to speak to you on this matter? If you listen to past press releases from the Premier, I'm everything that is to be despised: a leach on society, a cheat, a loud-mouthed rabble only interested in an easy life at the cost of other hardworking Ontarians. Well, I'm here to put a face on the statistics.

I and many other members of my family will be negatively affected by everything this bill seeks to do. Currently I'm on welfare, living in a housing co-op with a rent-geared-to-income subsidy, after the breakup of a 23-year marriage, and mother of a 16-year-old daughter. "Aha," you say clearly, "this woman can be ignored." But please listen; this has not always been the case.

I'm a third-generation Torontonians. I spent most of my youth growing up in Scarborough. As the eldest of five kids and the daughter of a truck driver, the pressure to go to work was high. The dream of going to university was just a fantasy that happened for other people. I worked part-time at 15 and full-time at 18. I was married at 19.

Even so, I already had a strong commitment to volunteer and to the ethic of always giving back to the community. I have been a hospital volunteer, a member of the St John Ambulance brigade, a Canadian Girls in Training leader, a Sunday school teacher and, in partnership with my husband, a volunteer in Big Brothers.

It's my activities in the last 10 years that I am most proud of, but first I'd like to let you know how I got here. I worked long hours in offices or restaurants, making enough money to get by but never able to get ahead. Diagnosed as hypothyroid, medication, pain and a lot of unanswered questions became part of my life. We moved around: Bolton, Maple, Etobicoke and Milton. I am quite familiar with all the distinct identities of the cities within Metropolitan Toronto and the greater Toronto area.

After the birth of my daughter I was diagnosed as clinically depressed and anti-depressant drugs also were added to the inventory. Living with a severely depressed person is not easy. I bore the shame of not being able to pull myself up by my bootstraps. Being married to someone who has never been sick took our marriage down a rocky road that did not survive. Work became impossible. I could no longer cover up periods of non-productivity. I've even fallen asleep at my desk. For some reason this is always frowned upon. I needed to remove myself from all the destructive environments and deal squarely with my mental illness.

What has this to do with the megacity? Since moving to Harbourfront in 1986, I've found a community that needed a lot of volunteers. With easy access and encouragement from city councillors, school trustees and city employees, I have devoted most of my volunteer time to learning city process and planning issues. As part of a large group, we established a temporary community centre and became part of the redesign of Harbourfront. I've also sat as a founding board member and chair of the working group that is now in the final stages of building a 30,000-square-foot community centre and a JK-to-grade-8 public school.

It is from this process, during the thousands of volunteer hours I have spent in budget debates, negoti-

ations with the Toronto school board and other city departments, that I have gained a level of credibility within the planning circles.

My respect for the city of Toronto to maintain and promote a viable downtown core is what I firmly believe contributes to the great success of this city compared to other major world centres. My representation of my community on such projects as the Gardiner-Lakeshore task force, the Canada Maltng selection committee and the Toronto bay project, as well as the support task I provide to the Ward 5 office, has given me a broad knowledge of the workings of the city of Toronto.

I have watched over the years as Toronto has worked at streamlining its administration while trying to mitigate its impact on its employees. There are still several years to go to finally finish the plan and prove that anything worth doing well takes time.

I was originally fearful about coming here tonight because it appears that Queen's Park takes retribution on anyone who speaks out. Fear is punitive and it freezes productivity. The frustration and anger are now the atmosphere all around me.

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MPP Leach said today that megacity will make this a great city, ready to take on world markets. I say the slash-and-burn techniques of this government take away hope, reduce productivity, stall growth. Strength and commitment is found in each member of the community in the security of belonging, being able to contribute and having that contribution recognized and respected. Democracy is messy and time-consuming, but essential for a healthy and promising future.

And what about me? Well, I calculate that with my subsidy, welfare payments and payment for my drugs, I receive from the public purse \$12,900 a year. My housing charge goes mostly to our mortgage payment, which contributes to bank profits. I pay hydro, gas and phone bills, which keep people working. And I have \$60 left a month to live on, which all gets put back into the economy at the retail level for food. My furniture mostly came from the garbage and from donations from friends. I receive some help from the food bank, but I also volunteer in the supper club and help promote basic cooking and life skills with my neighbours.

My daughter is a grade 11 student who has maintained honours throughout her high school career. She also understands the importance of post-secondary education. She has a strong volunteer ethic, as she's teaching drama to grade 6 students at Regent Park public school and reads to a blind senior citizen in the area. I also have a reputation to help in a crisis and often receive calls late at night when other community members need a friendly ear or emergency babysitting or help to fix a broken pipe. I'm very flexible.

There are no traditional solutions to my situation. To re-establish a link to the working world and support myself will take vision, cooperation and understanding. I am a vital member of my community, which understands and supports my limitations.

The province receives a windfall from my contributions. If they paid for my services, it would cost them at least three times more. I am putting my life back together

slowly and in a great part from the support of a city able to deal with people one at a time. I am not alone and my story is not unique. My community could provide hundreds more with stories like mine. We are all trying to deal with the harshness of our life and bring up our children as responsible and contributing members of our future in a positive and caring way. I will survive. Being a member of poverty gives you a lot of skills that you don't get otherwise. I'm not so sure about the city of Toronto.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, and we have time for one quick question.

Mr Silipo: I won't ask a question, Ms Roy, but I will just say thank you for appearing and, as you said at the beginning of your presentation, for putting a face to the statistic.

Ms Roy: Thank you very much.

TIM JONES

The Vice-Chair: Next we have Tim Jones. Welcome, Mr Jones. You may begin.

Mr Tim Jones: Good evening. My name is Tim Jones. I am here this evening as the co-chair of ArtsVote, a non-partisan, multidisciplinary arts advocacy network. Our movement encompasses more than 200,000 individuals in Metro whose livelihood is directly or indirectly derived through the arts. Our mission is to promote the enhancement of the arts infrastructure and to ensure that Metropolitan Toronto maintains its position as a major international cultural centre through coherent policies and sustained municipal and regional arts funding.

Through the day and over the last few weeks as the debate over amalgamation and the downloading of responsibilities rages on, you have no doubt heard innumerable references to the impending threat to the quality of life which has made Toronto and the surrounding region the envy of the world. To some, this quality of life seems to be a nebulous concept, one which is difficult to measure and whose impending endangerment is not easily grasped. And yet quality of life is a central element in what attracts businesses and individuals to live and work in this region. In other words, it is something that a business-minded government should be centrally concerned with.

I'd like to ask you for a moment to consider the role artists have played in enhancing the quality of life in our region:

"Toronto's rich artistic and cultural life has been singled out again and again in local, federal and international studies as one of its most appealing features. Even citizens who have never attended a single arts event in Toronto have had their lives enriched by the presence of the arts sector here. A thriving cultural life with arts activities dispersed throughout the city has helped to keep our streets safe, populated and vibrant — attractive to citizens and visitors alike."

Despite being among the most poorly paid for our work, artists are among the most constructive citizens not only in their particular craft, but as parents and volunteers engaged in every aspect of the community.

The most recent StatsCan data confirm that Toronto's arts and cultural sector is a bedrock industry that contrib-

uted \$8.4 billion in 1993-94 to the gross domestic product in the greater Toronto area; employed a workforce of 224,875 individuals whose livelihood is directly or indirectly derived from cultural activities; and generated employment growth of 11% during the last recession, between 1988 and 1992, while employment in other sectors fell by 9%.

I could go on detailing the contributions of artists, arts organizations and cultural industries and their impact on our quality of life, our sense of pride and identity and our economy. I would like, however, to spend the few moments that I have to impress upon you how it is that all these seemingly intangible elements will be imperilled by the package of reforms which the provincial government is in such a rush to implement.

First, I would like to point out that the health and vitality of the arts sector is already seriously threatened. Since the current provincial government came to power, the budget of the Ontario Arts Council has been cut by 32%, a move which has sent many of our cultural institutions scrambling, with hospitals and other social service agencies, for other sources of revenue, which are increasingly difficult to find. Reductions in provincial transfer payments to municipalities have resulted in the further loss of 25% of the cultural grants budget at Metro over the last three years.

These cuts have not only eroded the volume of arts activity and its related economic spinoffs and benefits, they have created a climate of uncertainty for the entire industry. Banks are reducing or cutting off lines of credit. This is the reality. Newspaper headlines give all-too-regular accounts of the loss of another arts institution. The ecology of arts life in Metro, one which mixes non-profit and commercial activity, is gradually losing its infrastructure. That which has been built up over decades through carefully crafted public policy which supports and enhances the arts may now be swept away entirely.

What we have instead with Bills 103 and 104 and other proposed reforms is more of the crippling uncertainty which is currently devastating our sector. Despite artists' central role in enhancing the quality of our lives and generating economic prosperity, our community has not even been consulted.

David Crombie did not make time to meet with us; nor will Al Leach or the Premier. None of the proposed legislation makes but a passing reference to the arts. How, I would like to ask, in this climate of uncertainty, with the fate of our community hanging in the balance, are we to have any confidence in the future?

Experience at Metro Hall over the last three years has given us more reason for despair. When provincial transfer payments to municipalities were cut, we faced the serious possibility of the complete elimination of the cultural grants budget. Just imagine what will happen to our community once increased responsibility for welfare and social housing is added to the property tax bill. What will be the fate of our arm's-length funding agency, the Toronto Arts Council, which injects \$5 million into Toronto's arts scene?

Artists are as prepared as ever to be constructive citizens, to continue to help build a healthy and vibrant Toronto for the next century. We aren't afraid of change.

However, we demand to be listened to and respected. To date, we have been ignored. Where is the process for carefully considered public policy on the arts?

We in the arts community have great respect for process. Having a sound process is of course the key to any endeavour which combines creativity and collective will. Instead of a credible process, this government gives us a transition team of appointed officials who have the power to forever change our life and our city, and to do so without consultation and without any kind of impact study.

In the world of theatre, this is not how we develop a good play; this is how we create improvisational comedy. In effect, we have a government which is proposing the improvisational comedy approach to public policy.

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I'd like to ask members of this government what they would like us to conclude from all of this. Either the government knows exactly what it is doing — that is, you've carefully considered the impact of Bill 103, you know that your actions will destroy the quality of life of Toronto, you know what you are doing and your intention is to destroy the urban character of Toronto — or you have no idea what you are doing. You haven't had the time to study in detail the impact of your act on areas like the arts, but you're determined to find more ways and places to cut in order to fund your promised income tax break irrespective of what havoc and destruction you will wreak. In other words, you have no idea what you are doing and you don't care.

Or — and this is what I sincerely hope to believe is the case — you realize that you have made an error in judgment. You realize that developing good public policy requires more time and a credible process which examines the impact of changes, that downloading soft services on to municipalities will devastate their economies and quality of life, that the democratic will of the 2.3 million citizens of Toronto, Etobicoke, Scarborough, York, North York and East York is something of value, especially to politicians, and deserves not only to be listened to but respected.

I have to say that I don't envy the position that you're in; that is, that you know you have made a mistake and you're going to have to somehow find the courage to admit it. Do what David Crombie did: Pull back, reconsider, change your minds. It's not too late at this point.

Specifically, ArtsVote is asking you to allow time for a credible process to create coherent public policies in all areas, including the arts. What, after all, is the rush when so much is at stake and these decisions are going to be irreversible? We are also asking you to respect the democratically expressed will of the citizens of the region in the upcoming referendum.

Finally, we are asking all the members of the government to work constructively with our community to begin to rebuild confidence in our sector. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. We have one minute to have a question from the government members.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll be pleased to pose one. I see, Mr Jones, that just this past year, Metro council and the Toronto Arts Council gave virtually identical grants to quite a long list of various dance companies and other

recipients. Why would simply merging the budget change the mentality that right now has Metro being an equal player? If the budget increases proportionately, what leads you to believe that the kind of people who will be elected across Metro Toronto will have a different mindset towards cultural issues than they already have today?

Mr Jones: I'm happy to hear that you're proposing that the combined budget through Metro cultural affairs and the Toronto Arts Council be maintained. I don't think that's in the cards with the proposed legislation.

Mr Gilchrist: What would lead you to that conclusion, though? What arises from this bill that would change the mindset of the people you're electing right now all across Metro?

Mr Jones: It's simply our experience with the Metro government over the last three years. We know that as the transfers from the province to municipalities have been cut over the years, this last year we faced a battle where there were many Metro councillors who were opting for the complete elimination of the cultural grants budget. When we have to compete with the soft services on top of that, if the city dips into another recession, we are finished, and we're aware of that.

Mr Gilchrist: I think it would be just as realistic to speculate that when there are cost savings in the administrative side, it will take the pressure off, to paraphrase what you were saying, some of the marginal services if in fact that was how you were perceiving the Metro councillors dealing with you this past year.

Mr Jones: I beg to differ. I think there's no fat left at either the Toronto Arts Council or the —

Mr Gilchrist: No, no, no —

The Vice-Chair: I'm sorry.

Mr Gilchrist: Within the total budget.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for appearing before us. We appreciate your comments.

ROB FOTHERGILL

The Vice-Chair: Will Rob Fothergill come forward. Good evening. You have 10 minutes in which to make your presentation.

Mr Rob Fothergill: I'd like to thank the committee for affording all of us the opportunity to speak to the question of Bill 103. I'm sure you've had a long day and have heard a lot of opinions, and I don't want to go on at any length. I may not even need my 10 minutes.

I just want to add one more voice to the many voices you are hearing urging the government to at least reconsider the legislation advanced by Bill 103; to urge the government, notwithstanding the majority it has in the Legislature, not to act rapidly or rashly either for ideological reasons or for some kind of pride; to listen to the constructive analysis you've been hearing and will be hearing — and I've already been impressed in the hour I've been here by the quality of analysis and argument that's being made — of what might be the flaws in the planned changes.

Let us assume, as we must assume, that the present government has the common good as its highest value, that the common good is perceived to include fair,

efficient, responsible and economical government at all levels; government that taxes individuals and corporations equitably according to their ability to pay and that spends the revenue intelligently and fairly on the services that are its responsibility; government that uses its control of economic levers to promote general prosperity and not blatant advantage and disadvantage and that uses its law-making power to promote long-range common good, such as the preservation of the environment, which only government can do because individuals and sectoral interests cannot think that highly.

We have to assume that we all, as individuals and political parties and governments, have the common good as an ideal. What the common good is can be argued about, how to achieve it can be argued about, but our kind of liberal democracy depends on the assumption that government is entrusted with the general wellbeing and not with limited party aims. We have to assume that or there's no point in discussing anything at all. There's no point in holding these hearings, debating, exchanging views on policies.

The fact that we are here addressing you and that you are here listening, and listening with attention and respect, for which I commend you, confirms this assumption and gives us confidence in the democratic process, as long as it's not a sham, as long as you're not just sitting here patiently waiting us out, having agreed to spend 15 days and so many hours a day listening to as many people as have put themselves on the list.

All governments come to power with policies and schemes and solutions to perceived problems that they believe will promote the common good as they understand it. Some of these plans are specifically presented as electoral promises — "Vote for us and we will do this, that or the other thing" — and some plans are developed or announced or sprung on us while the government is in power and are assumed to reflect the view of the common good that got them elected, assumed without any actual touchstone of whether or not they do.

In both cases it's possible and even inevitable that the plans and policies will sometimes be ill conceived, too rapidly conceived; otherwise, governments would have to be regarded as infallible. I'm sure during any period in which you've been in opposition you have not regarded governments as infallible, therefore you can hardly regard yourselves as infallible, that you absolutely know what the common good is and how it can be achieved, then you must accept that there is a place and a need for second thought, for paying attention to reasoned criticism and advice.

Specifically, I would urge you to reconsider whether the amalgamation of the municipalities in Metro Toronto into one huge government will actually bring about the efficiencies and economies you propose and will actually avoid the damage and deterioration to civic life, when so many independent analysts, including some of your own advisers, predict that it won't.

I would urge you to reconsider also the proposed rebalancing of revenues and expenditures, the so-called offloading of welfare and social services to the municipal level, criticized so trenchantly in the *Globe and Mail* editorial of last Friday. I don't imagine the *Globe* and

Mail is in general hostile to the approaches and interests of the Conservative government in Ontario. Its arguments presumably have considerable weight with our policy analysts.

I would urge you, despite what you have boasted as a government, to pay heed to the referendum debates and to make them an occasion to argue your case as articulately as you can, to explain and justify and persuade us to respond to criticisms and suggested modifications.

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If your plan really is a good one, well-thought-out and genuinely promoting the common good, your proposals may well win the referenda, may well be supported by the public when they vote on them. On the other hand, if you lose the referenda, if the majority reject the proposal even after you have explained it as carefully and clearly as you can, then to impose it unilaterally merely because you have the power to do so would be fundamentally anti-democratic in spirit and not even very smart.

I am here only to urge you to listen with open minds to people with much greater expertise and authority and insight into these issues than I could possibly have, to listen with open minds to what is being urged in opposition to the bill and to the accompanying offloading of responsibilities for social services and to make this process, which you have consented to and initiated and which you are so far carrying on with respect, to make this process real and to allow the possibility that other people and other analysts have something to contribute to this debate. I hope that's not too much to ask. I thank you for your time.

Mr Gerretsen: You spent quite a bit of time, sir, talking about the process and how good it is to have these hearings. I certainly concur with that; it's better than not having the hearings at all. But unfortunately, we're tied into a situation here at Queen's Park — and I've only been here for the last year and a half — whereby it's certainly my impression that these public hearings are not anything like the kind of public hearings you normally have at the municipal level, a level with which I am much more familiar. Unfortunately, these hearings take place after the bill has already had second reading and all parties have staked out their position on it.

I sometimes wonder if the public out there isn't left with the wrong idea about these hearings. We would all like to think — I always think there's hope — that maybe once we've listened to 600 people basically saying the same thing in a number of different ways, it will make a difference for the government members and there will be some radical changes made and maybe the bill will be withdrawn and much greater thought given to the whole process.

But I think there's something fundamentally wrong with our system, the way we operate here at Queen's Park. These public hearings, in my opinion, should take place before all different parties stake out their position on a bill like this. I am afraid, from my limited past experience, that these public hearings aren't going to do all that much good. I hope to be wrong, but I wouldn't want you to be left with any kind of misunderstanding that somehow if we have 600 people or 1,000 presenting us with the same viewpoint, it's going to make any

difference to this government or indeed perhaps that it would have to any other government in the past.

Mr Fothergill: I'm very sorry to hear you as a representative express that fear. If that is the case, you are all wasting your time and wasting our time and merely politely, doggedly sitting through, listening to people like Jane Jacobs, who have a great deal —

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I don't feel that way.

Mr Gerretsen: You don't feel that way? Are you going to change this? Are you going to give me a commitment that you're going to change it after you hear 600 people say that? Come on.

Mr Newman: I said we don't feel the way that you do about the hearings process. Get real.

Mr Gerretsen: Be honest with the people out there. Your government has made up its mind and you're going to do it.

The Vice-Chair: Excuse me. We have a question being answered.

Mr Fothergill: If the member here is suggesting, as I think he is, that this is a genuine process, that you are genuinely listening to genuine concerned citizens with serious advice to give them, I am very glad to hear it and I look forward to your responsiveness to the referenda, which are a much larger public opinion poll than is normally taken, and that you seriously will have the grace and modesty to reconsider the proposals you're putting forward. I am very glad to hear it and I thank you.

Mr Sergio: I have time for one quick question. Thank you very much for your presentation, first of all. You have dealt with, as have many presenters before you, how the proposed legislation will be affecting the people up close, the various organizations as well, the arts groups and stuff like that. But we cannot overlook the business community. We have had the independent business association of Canada, I believe, and the board of trade. This also affects the homeowners. I think this is going to have severe implications for the business community in Metro, which can only help to decay the social fabric even further because the business community will be moving out of Metro Toronto into other areas or will close down, with job loss. Would you say it's an area where the government should rethink and say, "Let's wait and see how this will affect not only the residents but also the business community in Metro"?

Mr Fothergill: I would think arguments of that kind would be most persuasive with this government, whose concern is for economic rationality and the creation of jobs and so forth. I hope they also listen to arguments such as Mr Jones's about the function of the arts in this community, which I'm more engaged in.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity that you've given us tonight to hear your thoughts.

FRIEDA FORMAN

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call Frieda Forman. Good evening. You have 10 minutes in which to make your presentation. If there is time left, questions will be asked by the New Democratic Party.

Ms Frieda Forman: Good evening. I appreciate the opportunity of being here before you tonight. Many compelling arguments have been made in opposition to the proposal for a megacity, many well-reasoned presentations to halt the destruction of a city which has universally been recognized as a model of a magnificently functioning city.

Tonight I would like to address the issue from a personal point of view — personal in form and in content. That is, I'd like to examine the significance of such a move to the individual as citizen of Toronto.

I came to Canada from the United States in 1970. I settled in Toronto because it seemed like such a livable city. I've since become a citizen. In a short time, I realized that this quality was in large measure due to its involved, engaged residents who cared about the issues confronting them and their neighbours. Not only were they concerned but they had the means of translating those concerns into action by working with their elected city councillors, by calling upon them for assistance, advice and intervention when necessary. In a word, city councillors and residents, whether as individuals or as ratepayers, were all in it together. We shared a common fate.

This association was not some abstract, remote form of democracy. It was the real thing: participation, responsiveness, responsibility. The greatest asset of Toronto was its caring citizenship, fostered by a sense that one mattered, that local issues were taken seriously by our local representatives, who were also our neighbours, in many cases. That was my understanding of Toronto's greatness.

In an increasingly technologized society, we are all losing the sense of ourselves as individuals who matter. With rapacious automation, the impersonal rules our lives. We no longer have a way to make our voices heard. Voice mail is not a substitute for interpersonal communication. A megacity which will have to be propelled by ever-encroaching automation will destroy the very sense of a personal connection with our elected representatives. It will make ciphers of us all.

This dehumanization will eventually lead to an apathetic, indifferent citizenry, if not immediately, certainly in the future. We know this from countless examples in the United States, where anonymity has led to so much urban decay. This is something I was very much familiar with, and I'm sure you are as well.

Once again turning to the publicly minded citizen, that most precious asset of a city, her or his identity is shaped and influenced by a sense of belonging to a civil society, a society in which rights and obligations are respected and expected. For that reality to emerge, we must be convinced that our democratic participation is authentic, that our relations with our elected officials are based on genuine, mutually responsive associations. Megacity will at best offer us an illusory representation.

The relation between a responsible and a responsive government and its citizens is dependent on familiarity, on interaction at the local level. Megacity will destroy this bond, this delicate balance between citizens and their elected representatives. It will take from us that cherished sense of belonging, of counting, of participating in a reciprocal relationship.

I have taken my own citizenship very seriously, and my contribution has been publicly recognized. I was awarded the Constance Hamilton Award by the city of Toronto for service to woman, and Canada's 125th Anniversary Award. My connection to the city is inextricably linked to the knowledge that my voice is heard, that my elected officials want to hear from me, indeed expect to hear from me, that we are engaged in a partnership.

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All this will be taken from me. It will be taken from all of us who care deeply about the human aspects of our city. With this theft will go our sense of safety, an issue in particular which confronts women in their lives, for we do not feel safe in a metropolis which will replace sentient human beings with machines.

It is because of our deep affection for Toronto, for what it is and what it stands for, that we are fighting. We have seen such an outpouring of feeling and action because we know on a personal level that what we stand to lose is the very heart of our city. We will not let that heart be sacrificed for dubious gains. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We have a little more than four minutes for questions.

Mr Silipo: I'm quite happy, Mr Chair, if you want to divide that up and keep the rotation, because I don't need four minutes.

Ms Forman, if the government members were asking you a question, they might listen to what you say and then say, "But you know, Ms Forman, we're going to make sure that in this new megacity we have structures to try to deal with exactly what you said in terms of the neighbourhood committees and that whole process." I was interested in what your response to that might be.

Ms Forman: First of all, we doubt that. Let us say, if we're charitable, that we accept it as a possibility. They would not be our elected officials in the same way as the elected officials we now have a relationship with. I think that makes a very, very different kind of connection, kind of relationship. It is the very fact that they represent us as elected officials. Of course, as the number of elected officials is reduced, our access to them is reduced and thereby our participation, our being able to be active citizens, is reduced. What I outlined in my presentation I think is inevitable.

Mr Ford: Frieda, I would like to explain something to you. Right now, 72% of Metro services are already consolidated. That's the police department, public transit, social services and ambulances. The six governments and city bureaucrats divide among themselves 28% of the leftover spending.

Ms Forman: Yes, I'm familiar with those figures.

Mr Ford: That's what has to be solved: the 28% spending, not the overall 100%, the great transition everybody is concerned about. That's what has to be consolidated and done. I believe personally that it can be done and that it can be done in a very equitable manner, that 28%.

Ms Forman: I find that hard to believe, given the fact that a reduction in the number of councillors is inevitable by the calculations that are being put forth. We are all human beings. How can we accept that the ever greater intrusion of technology will provide for the kind of

contact that we cherish and that has made the city great? It's very important to realize that when we lose a citizenry that is involved, that feels connected and that belongs, and that can only happen when you feel that you have a responsive government, everything else really goes.

Mr Ford: I agree partially with what you're saying, but I still say that 72% of it has already been done and it hasn't had an effect yet. It has done nothing but good, because you couldn't run those various departments more economically.

Ms Forman: Nevertheless, at this moment we still have access to a Metro councillor and a local councillor, a city councillor, which means that we do have a way of speaking to government.

Mr Ford: Yes, but the mayors themselves wanted to cut down these councillors and different things. We're only from 106 down to 45. They were talking 48. There's a difference of approximately three in that figure. When I said that you looked a little confused, but they are facts.

Ms Forman: I don't think I'm confused about the major issues.

Mr Ford: I'm not saying you're confused, but you looked a little hesitant.

Ms Forman: The major issue is that we will have less contact with our elected officials. That is a great loss.

The Chair: On that note, we've come to the end of your 10 minutes.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order, Mr Chair: The mere fact that the six mayors came up with councils that had a total of 48 doesn't mean that's what they really wanted. They felt pressured into that.

The Chair: That's not a point of order, Mr Gerretsen. I think you're aware of that.

Thank you, Ms Forman, for coming forward and making your presentation this evening.

DAVID COOKE

The Chair: Would David Cooke please come forward. Welcome, Mr Cooke.

Mr David Cooke: Thank you very much. Many years ago somebody remarked to me, "I imagine you were extremely surprised to find that governments could act against the best interests of the people." I've had plenty of time since then to reflect upon a childhood state of innocence and also upon successive waves of governments which have done precisely that: acted against the best interests of the people.

I think this is precisely what is going on in the current amalgamation move, because it's happening in a context, a climate of opinion which has been very carefully fostered worldwide by various very powerful corporate global forces and it's happening because the business press has done its job very well for the last 20 years.

One of the themes that I notice the Tory government picks up very much on is the theme of competition and believes, or claims to believe, that this is a driving force behind the whole move. But it's not just a climate of opinion; what is going on is a worldwide move which fits in with the corporate agenda. The idea of this is to make the world safe for corporations, and it's doing rather well.

I pointed out that this is a move which is against the best interests of the people and I think this is happening

in two profound ways with the amalgamation bill. The first one is that it's so evident to the people that the reports which have been prepared by the people are being totally ignored. To the best of my knowledge and from the media reports and so on that I've come across, there's not a single report before this government which proposed the kind of amalgamation that's going on now, that's being proposed.

At the same time, I did not hear a whisper of citizen input to this bill before it hit the Legislature. Now, we all know that bills don't just come out of the ether; they come because there are various kinds of coordination and consultation that take place. But it didn't take place with citizenry that might have had an informed voice upon the whole thing, and I think it's highly significant that in the total context of the amalgamation bill and the offloading and various associated legislation even the chair of the Who Does What panel can't agree with the Tories in their current moves.

I agree with the previous speaker, who pointed out that with the existing system, no matter what consolidation has already taken place, there is a level of representation. You may argue over here about the difference between 48 and 44 representatives, or whatever. The point is not that; the point is that it's a decline from over 100 to less than 50. You'll have to talk very hard to explain to ordinary, dumb citizenry why that is not a reduction in representation.

Associated with this is the whole offloading, a thing which people find nauseous, the fact that in the current climate, in the globalization, in the move towards a corporate world, workers are being dumped. The whole idea is to streamline the economy and the effect of that is that a lot of people are going to be offloaded. They're going to be dumped. We're going to have Bantustans of workers in this country.

At the same time, we then clamp down — at least we don't; you do. You clamp down on welfare and unemployment insurance, and the net effect is that those who are already out of work are further disadvantaged. All this is a move towards the control of workers and the control of citizenry.

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Minister Leach had it precisely wrong this morning when he was speaking. He claims that amalgamation is somehow going to make this city more competitive. I fail to see the logic of his position. He claims that this is going to improve the business climate and so on. I think it's going to have precisely the opposite effect. When businesses see that they are going to be working in a declining base, they are going to take the message and they're not going to invest here; they're going to get out of situations like this.

In talking about this piece of legislation, it's hard not to look at related legislation like education, because so many similar processes are going on. I think it's worth a sideways glance at the education bill to recognize that what's going on there is a similar move towards reducing representation, with the very careful reduction in the number of trustees and obviously their pay and the amount of work they would do. Right now we have full-time trustees who are paid for their labour. The labourers

are worthy of their hire in this case. They do a more-than-full-time job, and the whole effect of the education restructuring is that there's going to be far less representation and they're going to do a much reduced job.

There is a related issue there which I want to mention in passing because I don't think it's had enough attention, and that is the notion of non-classroom personnel. Many statements about the education procedure and bill claim that there are far too many non-classroom personnel within the education system, within boards, within the ministry and so on. This is a piece of pernicious, blind nonsense.

If you were to spend any time working in a school, it would take you approximately half a day to realize that if you did not have the support of non-classroom personnel you'd never get through the day. I can give you one stunning example, which is the number of people who are social workers and corridor workers, police workers and all the rest of it. These are people who are absolutely indispensable. As we cut back on those, we cut back on the opportunities for teachers to do their job as teachers. I could give more, but let's get back to this current issue.

I've been stressing that I believe this amalgamation bill is against the interests of the people. In its procedures it has been against the interests of the people. In its effects it will be against the interests of the people. We might remember Shakespeare for a minute who said to us, "And now we have a little brief authority." The Tories have a little brief authority right now, but in a while, when they cease to be politicians or when they get turfed out, as in the next election, they will face the chance that they might again become people, and at that point they will be able to see some of the carnage they've created through this piece of legislative fascism.

Years ago Schumacher coined the phrase, "Small is beautiful." It's an interesting sort of notion and it has been operating in the very good service of the small boroughs around this city where people can be heard and make a difference and their interests can be enhanced. In this case, the opposite of "Small is beautiful" is "Large is loony," or you might say, "Amalgamation is awful." That's what I wanted to talk about.

Mr Colle: Mr Cooke, the point you made at the beginning is that this is not in the best interests of people. I know the other side has said, "The mayors' proposal was for 48 and we've got 44, so there's no difference," but I think what they fail to realize — you made the point very well — is that people did have a say in that, whether they wanted less or more elected officials, and the mayors' proposal was put forth with a gun to their heads. In other words, they knew they were on their deathbed or whatever it was and they had to come up with something. That's maybe what's fundamentally flawed here, that it's looking at pure numbers and not looking at whether it's good government or not.

Mr Cooke: I think you've analysed it right: They felt manoeuvred so they had to come up with a compromise position. But ultimately, I'm not prepared for democratic decisions to be based upon just the opinions of six or seven mayors. I realize they are elected and that they're representing, but behind them stand the people, and that's the voice that should be heard. The people are trying to

shout to this Tory government, "We don't think this move is anywhere near good enough."

So I agree with your analysis, but I think we've got to go a step further and point out the inadequacy of being led by people who've been pushed into a corner.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Cooke, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee this evening.

JUDY HUNTER

The Chair: Judy Hunter, please. Good evening, Ms Hunter.

Ms Judy Hunter: I want to talk about how I see amalgamation as part of a larger movement towards increased inequality in our society in economic and political ways. I see it as a movement that makes the wealthy wealthier, that works to make the powerful more powerful. It works to make the rest of us have less voice in government, less participation in the way we're governed and get less information about what's happening. It makes the rest of us have a harder time getting jobs, have to work harder at the jobs we have and have a generally lower standard of living.

How do I see amalgamation as part of that movement? First, I see it in the motivation of this bill. I think there was no public mandate for this bill. There was nothing heard about it. Nobody was shouting for it. We first heard it announced by the government last fall. There was no recent expert mandate for this bill. In fact, even the recent expert study by the Tories has come out against it. The third thing is, it wasn't even in the Common Sense Revolution. It wasn't part of that, so the government cannot claim that people voted for it. No one knew it was in the government's mind.

Second, I see the process by which it's being implemented as very undemocratic. Its public promotion has been cited in the Legislature as being in contempt of the Legislature.

The other thing I see as anti-democratic is the transition trustees. I see them as taking the power of our elected officials and showing contempt in that way for the people's choices. The secret meetings with the closed doors we've been seeing on television show that we don't even know what's happening there. They seem to have no accountability to the public. I've heard they have the right to restructure how the new city will be organized, with no accountability to us because they will be appointed rather than elected.

The third thing I see as problematic is the planned structure of the new city. The government is claiming that we'll have community councils that will be the voice of the people, but who will these people be? Who will the community councils be? They don't seem to have any accountability; they won't be elected. They may be appointed or may be volunteer. They'll be chosen by people who are in power, who are their friends. They won't have to answer to us in any way. We won't be able to elect them or say that we won't elect them again. They'll just become another layer of bureaucracy and they may not even have to respond to us; another layer of bureaucracy for us to have to go through to get to the

people we have elected, and the people we have elected will be farther away from us.

What do I think about the results of this? I've heard on the radio that the government says nothing in our neighbourhoods will change. People are quite concerned about them. Mike Harris says he lives in Willowdale, and Willowdale, even though it's now a part of North York, has kept its close-knit neighbourhood quality for all the time he's lived there. I lived in Willowdale for 12 years, and when I first moved there, there were a lot of small houses and tree-lined streets and small families that lived there. People knew each other on the streets. It was a fairly close-knit community.

But in the time that I lived there, the community changed drastically and the people were very angry about it. They went to city hall and they spoke out against it, but nothing happened. What happened is that the developers took over. They bypassed the city bylaws, they changed the neighbourhood, they cut down trees, despite repeated complaints by the people who lived in the neighbourhood. Now people look across the street at great, big garage doors; they don't see each other. People have big, high fences behind the buildings. They look out their side windows and see great, big brick walls. I don't think that neighbourhood has benefited at all. It has hardly kept anything more than its name. Maybe Mike Harris lives in a different part of it.

2050

The other thing I want to speak about is American cities. I grew up in American cities and I have a terrible feeling that's what's going to happen to Toronto. The tax bases get eroded in the core of American cities. Businesses tend to move out because they don't want to have to pay high taxes that support social programs, which may be what's happening here. The wealthy people either move out to the suburbs, to what was the equivalent of the 905 area here, or they barricade themselves in neighbourhoods with guards and fences and electronic equipment and guard dogs all around. Those people who are left living in the core tend to live in a dirty city that nobody wants to visit. When the people from the suburbs come to entertain themselves downtown, they drive down there in cars and they rush to their concert halls and rush back again. They don't stay there. They don't walk on the streets. They don't enjoy the city life. A lot of hopeless people live in the city now. They tend to get a lot of diseases like TB, which has become rampant in American cities. Violence, desperation and lots of drugs — I don't think I have to say all this; everybody knows it.

Maybe some people think: "Well, this is okay. These people don't work hard." I remember Mike Harris saying the reason he doesn't have to eat baloney sandwiches any more is because he has worked hard all his life and these other people who have to eat baloney sandwiches may be undeserving and that this government will be more efficient.

But dictatorships are the most efficient form of government, and I don't think this will result in a better life for even the wealthy people. They will have to spend more money on trying to be healthy, more money isolating themselves from the riff-raff, more money on keeping themselves safe from violence, more money to have a

leisure life that keeps them from having to walk on the streets and enables them to drive downtown and drive back, more money on private education because public education is no longer well funded.

I think these are important things that we need to think about in terms of amalgamation. This is the big problem with amalgamation and it's the same problem with much of what this government is doing. That's all.

The Chair: Thank you very much. You have about three minutes for any questions. Mr Silipo.

Mr Silipo: Thank you, Ms Hunter, for your presentation. I just want to go back to what you ended with, as well as what you began with, which is that you put this in the broader context of what you see the Harris government doing.

I think there are certainly days, and I'm sure we'll see more of this, when the government members will want to try and pull this piece out of the rest of the puzzle and say to us: "No, no, no, this isn't about the downloading; this isn't about the tax break. This is just about making government in Metropolitan Toronto more efficient."

What they won't be able to answer of course, if they take that line, is why they are, then, so bent on proceeding in this anti-democratic way, why they are proceeding in a way that doesn't allow any kind of process for real discussion about what the options are in Metropolitan Toronto while they're doing that in every other conceivable municipality that's looking at amalgamations.

The answer, as I see it, and I'd be interested in your thoughts, is because they want to score some cheap political points in saying to the rest of the province that they're beating up on Toronto, which will get them some mileage. They're also going to be able to say, "Look at all the politicians we got rid of. We took seven municipalities and moulded them into one. Aren't we great? We did all this. We're tough. We can make these big, tough decisions," and care not one bit about what it does to democracy and to local involvement of people and citizens on a day-to-day basis.

I don't really have a question out of that, other than perhaps inviting your comments further on that and perhaps further on how you see this really fitting in as part of the broader scheme of what Mike Harris and company are up to.

Ms Hunter: Yes, I agree. I think that so far the government has been somewhat lucky in getting support for its comments and its moves to make government leaner, but I think at some point people are going to realize that the leanest governments are also the most dictatorial. They are often the least democratic. It only takes one person plus an army to be very efficient. That's not democracy.

I think also the government is trading on the idea that it can kick Toronto. Toronto has often been seen by people outside, in northern Ontario, as the rich, leisure place that gets all the money and gets everything. But I think that now other municipalities that are also being amalgamated are beginning to see what the problems will be: the problems with farmers who are going to lose their tax break for education because of the downloading of this, the problems with other small municipalities that are going to lose their identity.

Mr Newman: That's not true.

Ms Hunter: Well then, maybe you need to make it clear if it's not true. There certainly is a feeling out there that these things are not being done democratically, that they are being oversimplified and presented in a way that makes us seem as if we're stupid enough that we can't understand it. Advertisements that show our society as a bunch of frayed wires really talk down to the public.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation this evening.

KEN KLONSKY

The Chair: Would Ken Klonsky please come forward. Good evening, Mr Klonsky.

Mr Ken Klonsky: Thank you. First, I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to speak on Bill 103. My understanding is that this committee is actually listening and not seeing this democratic exercise as an annoyance or a roadblock. I say this because there are times when I feel the members of this government have little patience for loyal opposition.

I find it ironic to sit here as a member of the NDP speaking in the role of small-c conservative, speaking out against a bill put forward by a supposedly Conservative government which seeks to sweep away the past with lightning speed. Some have called the movers of this bill evil, but I have found that such dichotomies as good versus evil are not always useful in politics. However, these so-called conservatives, the movers of Bill 103, must see themselves as well-motivated, as disciples of progress called upon to bring half the people of Ontario kicking and screaming into the 21st century. Is this not why Bill 103 feels like something of a juggernaut, the leaders of some of our cherished institutions being crushed beneath its wheels?

I oppose Bill 103 because it does not speak the language of compromise. I oppose the self-righteous attack on democratically elected officials through appointed trustees. Indeed the root of "trustee" is trust. It is plain that the movers of this bill do not trust the very people we have trusted to govern us. I do. Is ensuring future prosperity, which I am sure the movers of this bill seek for Ontario, an excuse to subvert the system which protects us all? Would the leaders of Ontario welcome a hostile takeover of this province by the federal government?

I oppose Bill 103 because I value local democracy. I see a loss of accessibility and accountability as the inevitable result of such a drastic cut in representation.

I came to this city in 1967 as a graduate student at the University of Toronto. I quickly learned about the vital and caring nature of the local politician. I lived in an apartment on College Street across from the university. Perhaps a small handful of other residents lived within a four-block radius. Soon after I moved in the city began to dig up the streetcar tracks from University Avenue to St George Street. Since the area was, and is, heavily trafficked, the work started at 1 in the morning, right until dawn.

Obviously I could not sleep with the noise of jackhammers, but I also understood that my apartment was not in a real residential area. Nevertheless, I called

city hall early the next morning and was quickly routed to my alderman. Having come from the US, it shocked me to be able to actually speak to a politician and not a civil servant. I explained to him, probably not too politely, what the problem was. The next morning my sleep was uninterrupted, the work having been transferred to a daytime shift at considerable inconvenience to drivers. At the time I thought to myself, "What a wonderful place Toronto is." I had found my home for life.

Even now, living in the city of York, the area residents decided that something needed to be done about the deterioration of a small neighbourhood park. Our councillor, Mr Mihevc, organized a group out of my own house to address the problem. Funds were set aside and improvements have been phased in incrementally. This responsiveness is my idea of accountable and accessible local government.

2100

Don't you think the federal ridings are too populous and that neighbourhood councils lack the time and expertise to provide this type of leadership? Or was this dilution of effective power the goal of the legislation? If that is the case, then my fears about the loss of local democracy are altogether justified.

I would like to conclude by reminding the committee of an important principle: While every major decision must involve gain and loss, Bill 103 takes too much away from people and does so with such legislative violence that many local citizens are now violently angry. This anger should not be disregarded. It is a clear indication of a scientific principle, one of Newton's inviolable laws: To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Is not what is true for physics also true for human interactions? Put in biblical terms, those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation. You have about five minutes left for questions.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you for your presentation before us here tonight. Let me just bounce a couple of things that Chairman Tonks said to us this morning in his presentation:

"What has given us this quality of life is our values, beliefs and attitudes and a political culture of sharing and caring. I simply cannot believe that these will disappear with the elimination of some internal borders, a half-dozen city halls and a few thousand bylaws. Anyone who seriously believes that vastly underestimates the people of this city."

Do you disagree with the chairman that somehow artificial political boundaries are what make Toronto the caring community that it is?

Mr Klonsky: No. The system of democracy does.

Mr Gilchrist: Okay. Let's deal with that. Right now we have two distinct municipal governments, each doing one half of the services, not quite mathematically but sort of half in terms of the different tasks. Actually, Metro delivers 72% of all the services by dollar, which means the six cities are splitting the other 28% between them.

But let's just say 50-50. We have two councillors each doing half the job of representing what in, say, Barrie, London or Windsor is done by one councillor. Whether it's overseeing the police, the fire, the ambulance, the

roads and all the other issues in all the other communities outside the 13 regional governments, in a place like London one councillor is your point of contact. The suggestion here is that you will now move to one councillor as the point of contact for all those services I've just mentioned.

Right now a Metro councillor represents, roughly speaking, about 70,000 people. In Scarborough, in fact overlapping my riding, the city councillor represents 60,000 people. The new standard will be 50,000 people. If we currently have Metro councillors delivering three quarters of the services in an area far bigger to a population base far larger than what the new councillors will face, how does that equate with the new councillors being less accessible, less accountable or incapable of doing the job?

Mr Klonsky: Forty-four is less than 100 and some odd, that's all I see. My feeling is that what you're doing to democracy here is much more serious, and that's the crux of my argument. I can't argue with your figures. I'm not an expert and I'm not an economist.

Mr Gilchrist: It's not a question of the specific numbers. It's the issue that if two people are each doing half of the administration of municipal services and now it's done by one person, how does that make it any less democratic? If London can do it —

Mr Silipo: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I'm sure Mr Gilchrist would not want to knowingly mislead the committee. Every other municipality has two people representing people in the local municipal structure: the county level and the local level.

Mr Gilchrist: Not in those services. That's not a point of order.

The Chair: That's not a point of order, Mr Silipo.

Mr Silipo: Let's put the facts on the table.

Mr Gilchrist: The specific services I listed are overseen by one London councillor or one Windsor councillor or one Sudbury councillor.

Mr Silipo: They have a second level of government.

Mr Gilchrist: Anyway, the point of the mathematical exercise was simply to get from you how you would conclude that if one person is now charged with that task of handling all those municipal services, and presumably you'll still vote for someone who lives in the area so that they share your concerns, and if that person is still operating in this jurisdiction — Metro councillors work in downtown Toronto, so it's the same context — how does that change it in any way from the status quo?

Mr Klonsky: I don't understand why these neighbourhood councils are necessary in this case if it weren't because of the reduction in representation. It seems to me the neighbourhood councils are meant to cover that.

I would wish that the people who moved the bill would respect the democratic process. That, to me, is still something very vital, and we've lost it here.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Klonsky, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee this evening.

Just a reminder: The subcommittee will meet at 9:08 in room 110 across the hall. This committee stands recessed until Wednesday at 9 am.

The committee adjourned at 2106.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Chair / Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York PC)

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*Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood L)
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*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
Mr Terence H. Young (Halton centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick PC) for Mr Young
Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West / -Ouest PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber PC) for Mr Danford
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Hardeman
Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands /
Kingston et Les Iles L) for Mr Gravelle)
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Stewart)
Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore PC) for Mrs Ross
Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights L) for Mr Gravelle
Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John L. Parker (York East / -Est) for Mr Young
Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt ND) for Mr Len Wood

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale ND)
Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River ND)
Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine ND)
Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition)

Clerk pro tem /

Greffière par intérim: Ms Lisa Freedman

Staff / Personnel: Mr Jerry Richmond, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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Mercredi 5 février 1997

Standing committee on general government

City of Toronto Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 sur la cité de Toronto



Chair: Bart Maves
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Wednesday 5 February 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Mercredi 5 février 1997

The committee met at 0904 in room 151.

CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Consideration of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

The Chair (Mr Bart Maves): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the standing committee on general government. Sorry for the delay this morning. I had a few administrative matters to take care of first thing. Before we begin hearing from our first presenter, the clerk would like to explain the cancellation policy to the committee.

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms Lisa Freedman): In the subcommittee report that was adopted on Monday the committee agreed that they wanted to fill any cancelled time slots that arose on a quick basis if at all possible and authorized the Chair to approve the final details. What people have in front of them is the cancellation policy that will be implemented as of tomorrow.

In essence, we will be opening up lists between 8:30 and 9 in the morning for people who may be in the committee room throughout the day who are prepared to come and speak before the committee at next to no notice. If there is a cancellation and it's not being used for other committee business, those people will have an opportunity to appear before the committee if they sign the list between 8:30 and 9.

PETER HISCOCKS

The Chair: Would Peter Hiscocks please come forward. Good morning, Mr Hiscocks. Welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes this morning to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit. At the end of your presentation, if there is some time left over, I hope you will stay for a few minutes to entertain some questions.

Mr Peter Hiscocks: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Bill 103. My name is Peter Hiscocks. I teach electrical engineering at Ryerson Polytechnic and I also operate a consulting business in electronics. I grew up in the town of Weston and I've lived in Toronto most of my life.

A few years ago Norm Sterling, who is a Conservative MPP and an engineer, suggested that politics would bene-

fit if more engineers were involved, so I'm here to do my bit. The Conservative ads for the megacity show the Premier sorting out an electrical mess, so perhaps I can offer some consulting services.

I would like to look at Bill 103 from an engineering standpoint. When engineers do a project, whether it be a large building or an electronic microchip, they consider the following questions: First, is there a demand for the project? Do people want it? Are they willing to pay for it? Second, is there a good probability of success for the project? In other words, will it work? Third, will the project be cost-effective?

Let us look at Bill 103 from the standpoint of these three questions.

Question number 1: Is there a demand for the project? Engineers have been known to design projects for which there is no demand or market. The project is driven top-down and belongs to the "If we build it they will come" school of thought. For years, the American car manufacturers built large cars, and only large cars, because someone in Detroit had determined that everyone wanted large cars. Of course, they were proven wrong by the Japanese and European car manufacturers. We don't know if there is any demand for the megacity, because we haven't had the referendum yet. The designers of Bill 103 have said they will ignore the results of the referendum. In effect, they have said they don't care whether the market is receptive or not. This is poor engineering.

Question number 2: Is there a probability of success? In other words, will the megacity work better in some sense? Will citizens enjoy better access to services? Will the city be more responsive to citizen concerns? The American experience, in the references that I've read, is that service and citizen participation in larger cities decline. In fact in New York and Los Angeles citizens are trying to form smaller political units by seceding from these cities to make their cities work better. It is common sense that a larger city is more bureaucratic, to the detriment of both services and democracy. The government has provided no evidence, in my opinion, that the project will be a success in those senses, so this too is poor engineering.

Question 3: Will the megacity be cost-effective? It is being touted by the government as common sense that one large city is more cost-effective than several small ones. There are some good reasons why this is not so, and the consultants have noted this in their studies. For example, labour costs rise to match the highest level of the amalgamated cities, there is no competition between boroughs to keep the costs down, and political control of the bureaucracy is less effective because it's much larger.

If it is common sense that bigger cities save money, we may say it is also common sense that the sun rotates around the earth, that the earth is flat, that tough prison sentences always reduce crime and that competition necessarily lowers prices. These are all common sense, and they are all wrong. The megacity may well not be cost-effective, and this is poor engineering.

0910

In summary, the megacity in my opinion flunks an engineering analysis on all three counts.

I think it is good to remember a historical example of the misguided "bigger is better" syndrome, and that is the forced collectivization of agriculture in Communist Russia. It was common sense to Stalin that larger farms would be more efficient. In fact, after enormous social disruption and tragedy, it turned out that the larger farms were less efficient, and 50 years on, Russia is returning to smaller units and private ownership.

More recently, in my area of expertise, we have seen large mainframe computers, tended by computer priests in locked rooms, give way to smaller, personal computers linked by the Internet. This technology is a metaphor and an enabling technology for smaller political units and greater local autonomy, and Bill 103 flies in the face of this development.

One final comment: The electorate is grouchy, as we have seen with the fall of the previous Liberal and NDP governments in Ontario. If something is imposed for which there is little demand, that does not work and that is not cost-effective, they are going to be very crabby indeed. It is well to remember what happened to the federal Conservative Party in the last election. In politics, as in engineering, there's a serious price to be paid for mistakes.

I would urge the government to reconsider Bill 103. There are better ways to improve city government.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Hiscocks. Mr Colle, you have just over three minutes.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Mr Hiscocks, I think your metaphor analogy is quite intriguing, where you compare this megacity to going back to the past and creating a mainframe approach to governance. This goes contrary, obviously, to what is happening throughout the world now, where people are individually hooked into information and hooked, certainly in their workplace, through individualized connections through the Internet, as you said.

In terms of an engineering perspective, could you comment on the trends in how workplaces or structures become more efficient when they are competitive and when they are individualized?

Mr Hiscocks: One of the things that happens is that now that these electronic means exist, there's very rapid dissemination of information. So the notion that everybody has to be in the same geographic location no longer applies. People can be distributed across a large city and get information very quickly. The communication paths make that possible.

A very simple example, apart from the Internet, is fax machines. We can fax information to our political representatives and it can come back to us very quickly. That has speeded up the whole political process and made it easier.

Mr Colle: I guess the government is saying it couldn't figure out a way of organizing six cities. This is why they say they rejected the Golden approach: because they couldn't understand how to make it work, given the fact that you had some regional responsibilities like police, protective services, ambulance and other social services. They just couldn't understand how to do it, so the simplest thing for them to do was go back to the mainframe approach and create this megacity model.

Mr Hiscocks: From my perspective, I don't get a sense that the city of Toronto has major problems in those areas. It seems to me that the system which has evolved over a long period of time certainly can be improved in a variety of small ways, but to simply dismantle the entire thing and start over again seems to me very, very risky from an engineering standpoint. When you undertake engineering projects, you try to minimize risk. This is an extremely risky approach from an engineering perspective. We think that it should evolve rather than that there should be a revolution take place, which is what is being contemplated.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Hiscocks, for coming forward this morning.

DAVID WOOD

The Chair: Could I please have David Wood come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Mr David Wood: Thank you. My name is David Wood. I live in downtown Toronto. Like my predecessor, I was trained as an engineer. I've lived in Toronto for 29 years. I work as an independent consultant, mostly in the marketing area, with a lot of time spent on computers. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Those elements of our environment that impact our quality of life the most are managed by our local government. Daily we experience its impact as soon as we leave our front door. We measure it by the quality of the sidewalks, our streets and parks, economic activity, pedestrians, traffic and trees, to name but a few, and generally it's good to live in Toronto. Bill 103 limits our ability to control these fundamentals by reducing and, for a period of time, removing our access to the levers of power that control them.

My neighbours and I have spent thousands of hours of our volunteer time to effect change because we are not satisfied with the status quo. We were encouraged when we voted to eliminate the Metro level of government and we saw proposals — the Golden report and the Crombie panel particularly — that appeared to be constructive and rational. Bill 103 ignores all this work. It instead tackles a problem that doesn't exist, usurps the powers of elected councils and makes its motivations suspect.

In summary, we recommend that Bill 103 either be withdrawn or allowed to die in committee. If it's deemed that something must be amalgamated, amend it to amalgamate the municipal electric utilities. It's the only area where we might see some benefits. Instead, where is the legislation to create the Greater Toronto Services Board?

Our specific reasons to reject the bill are as follows:

(1) Accountability of the bureaucracy and elected representatives will be diluted by reducing the councillor-population ratios by about 20%.

(2) Amalgamated services, based on our experience, are less responsive than the city, and Bill 103 presents no evidence that an amalgamated city will be even better.

(3) During a multi-year transition period, vested interests will be able to exploit neighbourhoods because chaos will reign behind the doors of city hall while everybody is getting "restructured." Any progress on local issues will stop; opportunities will be lost.

(4) The method of amalgamation is nothing short of usurpation of financial powers of the city council, carried out by appointees who have no accountability to the electorate most affected. The opportunities for abuse appear to be unrestricted: section 15. Sections 12 and 18 say their decisions will be "final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." These clauses make this legislation particularly odious, arrogant, and above the common law.

I fully expect my taxes for city services will increase, to which will be added the property taxpayer's obligation for the blank cheque to cover the costs of amalgamation itself, including the costs of the trustees and the transition team.

Bill 103, we think, is a bill crafted by bureaucrats only for the benefit of bureaucrats at the pleasure of the provincial government, and no one else.

Our cogent experience is as follows:

My local neighbourhood, formalized as the Toronto East Downtown Residents' Association, or TEDRA, is the foundation of our position. The neighbourhood lies east of Yonge to Sherbourne, and south of Gerrard to Queen. It has an urban area of 0.63 square kilometres, 29% of which is city services: roads, streets and sidewalks. It includes a growing population of 6,300 and provides a variety of services for the tourist, shoppers, those wishing entertainment, and the disadvantaged. It is one of the most diverse areas of the city, and because of its proximity to the downtown core, it participates in Toronto's billion-dollar tourist industry.

Our objective has been and continues to be to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood by, for example, getting rid of businesses that consistently infract their licences, enhancing the streetscape, attracting new business and encouraging residents to participate in their local community.

TEDRA was organized in 1991 in response to an influx of aggressive drug and street prostitution trades, with most buyers and sellers, I might point out, coming from outside the neighbourhood. Many businesses have been catering to these trades, and numerous police reports are on file to substantiate the violations of licensing regulations. We naturally turned to our local government for help.

0920

This is what we found out: The Metro licensing commission has the power to grant, review and revoke licences for businesses, including taxicabs. In spite of interventions by our Metro councillor and documented infractions of licences and charges laid by the police, it has been almost impossible to get a licence review hearing from this commission. In those cases when we have, it's taken at least 18 months. We have had, on occasion, a representative from this commission at our

monthly neighbourhood council meetings, but he gave up attending because we were constantly beating up on him because he could never deliver any solutions, even though he personally filed inspection reports supporting our position.

The resources of the commission have been devoted to Metro-wide issues, such as taxicab licensing, on which issue they managed to flood the market with too many cabs by granting more licences and we ended up having taxi-driven drug runs going through our neighbourhood because there was no other business, at least in downtown. We categorize the Metro licensing commission as an amalgamated service. Our rating on them is poor on responsiveness and insensitive to our problems.

Metropolitan Toronto Police has been going through a major reorganization of priorities and community policing styles called Beyond 2000. We have found that police divisions tend to reflect the personality of the person in charge at the division level, meaning that over time we see inconsistency in the response we get at the lowest levels of the organization. Also, 51 Division, one of the divisions serving our area, needs a new police station — the current one dates from 1950 — and although funds are allocated, property transfers will be required and Bill 103 will prevent it under section 10.

We can say that policing in our neighbourhood has become measurably more effective with the introduction of foot patrols. However, we spend all kinds of our time making representations to various police committees and budget groups to protect them. This is because police budgets seem to be modelled on suburban policing styles: police in cars, remote from the neighbourhood. It may work there; it doesn't downtown. It has taken us more than three years of lobbying to get as far as we've got, and we're constantly fighting a rear-guard action to protect our gains.

We categorize Metro Toronto Police as an amalgamated service. Rating is poor to medium on responsiveness to our issues but, on the whole, without a lot of work on our part, insensitive to the needs of the neighbourhood.

The Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario issues licences to establishments for the sale of liquor. To request and obtain a licence review hearing takes anywhere from six months to a year because, we're told, of a lack of inspectors due to government cutbacks. Rulings often are made a year after the hearing, by which time the whole landscape has changed already.

The LLBO and Metro licensing, by the way, taken together, can be viewed as a good example of the costs, wasted effort and ineffective consequences of the bureaucratic entanglement and messed-up objectives of these two levels of government. We consider the Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario as an amalgamated service. Rating is poor on responsiveness, sometimes sensitive to our problems, but their hands are tied.

City of Toronto: Our monthly neighbourhood council meetings are regularly attended by either the councillor or his executive assistant. The city planner responsible for our area of the city also attends to keep us in touch with issues. We're advised of, and consulted on, undertakings by the city and developers in the neighbourhood and have

had the participation of developers in some of our workshops and meetings.

Rooming-house licences are granted, reviewed and revoked by the city. Following a complaint, it takes about two to three months for an investigation to be made and a hearing to be held.

On more mundane matters — for example, garbage and noise — we find that the city is politically responsive and we actually do get a response from the bureaucracy, although sometimes it's tardy.

We categorize the city of Toronto as a non-amalgamated collection of services, rating, in comparison, medium to good on responsiveness, usually sensitive to our concerns, helpful politically, but sometimes tardy in their bureaucratic response.

These examples, we think, should illustrate why we're sceptical of services in an amalgamated city being better than what we're getting today.

On the issue of taxation, granted, assessments are out of date and they really do need to be fixed. That notwithstanding, over the last five years my property taxes have increased by 15%. Excluding the education component, it's broken down as follows: taxes for Metro, the amalgamated services, have increased by 19.7%, or almost 4% per year; taxes for the city of Toronto, the non-amalgamated services, have increased by 2%, or 0.4% per year. Why? Does this demonstrate that the city is more aware of the taxation burden than Metro and that they have worked to keep them down while coming out of a recession? Does a new management structure at the city mean they will hold the line with greater efficiencies? What confidence can we have that taxes for an amalgamated city will not be similar to Metro's, or worse?

Studies show that US cities of more than one million population spend 21% more per capita than cities with 500,000 to a million residents. The same report states that amalgamated US cities of more than one million population spend 38% more than the average amalgamated city. It is also observed that, "There is no academic evidence to suggest that consolidation produces savings." Based on our experience, neither will it improve services. Why would an amalgamated Toronto be any different? No answer is provided, except for the draconian measures hidden within the legislation.

In conclusion, we think that Bill 103, if implemented, will cause our taxes to go up. We will have a council with no control, a bureaucracy that ignores us and a deteriorating quality of life. If the economic vitality of the city declines, nobody wins and we all lose.

This legislation causes more problems than it solves, will be expensive and aggravating to implement, and is without demonstrable benefit. The Economist, the only publication that comes into my house that doesn't seem to have a vested interest in this bill, characterizes all of the announcements from this government as a whirligig. Whirligigs, they point out, have a way of spinning out of control and even of savaging the man in charge. I think everyone should duck. The flak is about to fly and the Toronto taxpayer is the target.

We recommend that Bill 103 be withdrawn and replaced with a bill that gives form, structure and objec-

tive to the Greater Toronto Services Board. This will be certainly a more productive use of our time.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood. You have effectively exhausted your 10 minutes, but I want to thank you for coming forward to the committee this morning and making your presentation.

URSULA FRANKLIN

The Chair: Would Ursula Franklin please come forward. Good morning.

Dr Ursula Franklin: Good morning. This seems to be the morning of the engineers. I'm a retired engineering professor myself. I come here not only because, like the others, it's part of an expertise that I want to bring to you, but also because I have throughout my life been very much involved in planning and neighbourhood activities in this city. I've been a director of the Deer Park ratepayers' association. I've been in on the planning of the planning board quite extensively, and I in fact received an award of merit by the city for it.

I come also because I think what is before you, as elected members, is very important work. If I thought that this hearing would be a mere ritual or charade, I have other things to do; I wouldn't be here.

I think this is an important, significant part of the process and that it so happens that in this time of history there's a particularly important role that you, as elected representatives, play. You hear comments and objections to a bill that is of extreme importance in the legislative process of this province. I want to say to you why I so strongly object both to the content and to the method of this bill.

But before that, I also want to say what I said at the end of that sheet that is before you. I think this is one of those historical occasions where individuals count. That's why I am here, because I think you will look at this as elected representatives, as people who have sworn an oath of office. I looked at your oath of office, which says in a fairly nondescript way to be faithful and to have and be mindful of the allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen.

I thought about what that means. It does mean to discharge the duties of governance as the constitutional monarch would and should: without favour, without prejudice, in the face of being in charge, to look after the benefit of all. So you will be bound by your oath of office and you will be bound by the duty you have here to listen. The people who come before you, who take the time and trouble to come and to write, do so because they believe you can make a difference.

0930

I'm among those who urge you, as my colleagues have done, to reject the bill, to reject it outright on the basis of both the content and the method. The content has been dealt with. You remember as well as I do that amalgamation wasn't an issue discussed publicly or among professionals until late October last year. The bill was introduced in the middle of December. That isn't much time, if one doesn't assume the bill was in somebody's desk drawer. There isn't, and I think there will not come

to you, any evidence in favour of amalgamation in that sense of the destruction of five elected councils and with this as a structural framework of democracy.

It does not mean that there aren't questions, that there aren't problems, as every and any city has. The Golden report has laid down the problems of the area and the approach to their solution. I'm reasonably familiar with some of these things. I have not seen anything that could be cured by amalgamation and amalgamation only. There is no past task nor can I see any future task that in terms of content, the destruction of an existing framework, could be the basis for future work for the sake of a non-existing, non-democratic framework in terms of its content. It does not seem to me in any way warranted.

As legislators you will know that every piece of legislation has indeed to solve a problem that other current legislation cannot do. You cannot produce a dog catchers act when the existing dog catchers act will do or could be amended to take in pit bull terriers. Every piece of legislation has to resolve a problem that cannot be resolved in any of the existing ways. I suggest to you that Bill 103 is not needed for city governance.

What I object to, and I am sure you will object to even more strongly, are the methods of this bill. Think of what it does. Don't get waylaid by details. The bill dissolves elected representation in five municipalities and sets in its place trustees. When in the public sphere is a measure taken that involves bringing in trustees and pushing aside those who have done the business of the organization before?

In the public sphere this is done when an organization in some way has been accused or found guilty of gross misconduct and that misconduct, whether it is financial, moral or administrative, could not be dealt with by any means except removing the incumbents and putting in trustees. Trusteeship without cause I think has not been heard of in the public sector. That's what the bill does.

There is another case for trusteeship that we know historically and that is colonial. The colonial powers go in and say to the natives: "Your tribal councils are a bunch of nits. You don't know how to run your own affairs. We are your trustees." There have been trusteeships by the United Nations. Are you going to say Metro Toronto is Namibia?

I really think you must, as a committee of the Legislature, question what cause brings about the severity of trusteeship, and then I'm sure you will look at the trustees in terms of their rights and the lack of accountability and obligation. You will look at clauses 12 and 18 that one of my colleagues mentioned, at the lack of recourse of citizens to the courts. You are legislators. Do you really want a bill on the books that you passed that says citizens have no recourse to the courts?

I looked at provisions in which decisions of tribunals cannot be challenged. There is a clause in the OMB that the judgement of the OMB is final. You and I have seen cases in which OMB judgements have been appealed to the cabinet, but you also see the long process before a judgement is made. You also see that the circumstances, the issues are small and circumspect. That sort of blanket, "You can hire, fire, restructure, deal with money," and the courts are not available to the citizen, together with

many of the other provisions, I suggest to you, as legislators, regardless of where you sit in the House, you cannot in good conscience pass. You cannot have in Canadian law books that law as being passed by you.

I know, when all is said and done, the bill can be rammed through, but I am quite sure it will not and it will be because all of you have conscience. You are parliamentarians. You have courage. I suggest to you that the option of conscience and courage, in view of this bill, is the only option you have and that you should take the option —

The Chair: Dr Franklin, I apologize for interrupting but we've gone beyond 11 minutes. I appreciate your coming forward and making a presentation today.

Dr Franklin: I think I've said what I need to say. The rest is up to you. I wish you well.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr Franklin.
Applause.

The Chair: Order, please. Ladies and gentlemen, I regret to have to say that unfortunately in the Legislature audience participation is not allowed. The committee rooms in the Legislature are governed by those same rules. I'm a liberal chairman. I think even members of the opposition who have been on committees that I've chaired before will attest to that.

Mr Colle: A Progressive Conservative.

The Chair: A small-l liberal. But I would appreciate it if you'd just keep the applause to a minimum. I know you want to express yourselves but I am bound by the rules of the Legislature so, please, indulge me on that.

JOCELYN ALLEN

The Chair: Could Jocelyn Allen please come forward. Good morning.

Mrs Jocelyn Allen: My name is Jocelyn Allen and I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak at this committee. I was born in the city of Toronto and I have lived here for most of my life; over 50 years, not to be too specific. I grew up near St Clair and Yonge, I married into the Annex and I have brought up my family in south Rosedale, thus I feel that I am truly Torontonians.

I have always been an involved member of my community but I have never been politically active until now. I am driven to speak today by my profound concern for what is happening and what may happen in my city, in Metro and in the province. I am deeply disturbed by the Tory government's proposed Bill 103 and what I see as its repressive measures. At this hearing I will address only the issue of local democracy and some of the effects the bill would have on Toronto citizens and on its artists.

0940

Let me review some of the aspects of Bill 103. As I understand it, Bill 103 would put locally elected governments within Metro under trusteeship retroactive to December 17, 1996, the date the bill was introduced. Included would be the elected councils of Toronto, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, East York, York and Metro. In the bill the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, my local elected representative by the way, is given the power to pass any regulation needed to impose further controls on these local councils.

The organization and staffing structure of this new mega-municipality will be determined by a transition team appointed by the cabinet and reporting to the minister. The bill provides that the new council may not overturn staff appointments or other decisions made by these provincial appointees.

The bill also prohibits court challenges to anything provincial appointees do. There appears to be no recourse for those who disagree with Tory appointees. Thus Bill 103 puts the Harris government in complete control now of all municipal decisions within Metro boundaries as well as control of all important decisions of the new mega-municipality. To me, these measures are dictatorial rather than democratic.

Should it be passed, Bill 103 replaces the existing seven local governments with one municipal government for all 2.3 million residents, effective January 1, 1998. The new council will have 44 wards based on the federal boundaries, subdivided by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, without public hearings. Note that the city of Toronto will have one megacity councillor for 40,000 people — I repeat, one councillor for 40,000 people. Compare this with North Bay's one councillor for 5,300 people.

A mayor for the megacity will be elected at large, and the upcoming 1997 election will be conducted by a person reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Have you noticed how the phrase "reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs" keeps turning up like a bad penny?

As a nod to local government, the Tories will appoint 44 ward volunteer committees to advise the megacity councillors on local issues. How will these volunteers be chosen? On what merit? How, I ask, can these volunteers have the time or long-term commitment to truly serve their local municipality when they have to earn their living elsewhere, and how much clout will they carry with the appointed councillors, who are accountable only to the province? This would seem to me tokenism of the worst kind. Surely local government belongs to, and should be responsible to, the local citizens who elected it, not to provincial government.

All this change has been difficult to grasp. There has been much secrecy on the part of cabinet, and information has been slow in coming, partial or even misleading. Confusion reigns, and I have to conclude that is what the Tories want to happen.

Many questions remain. There is the question of reckless haste. Why are the Tories trying to ram this bill through in such a mad rush? Why are they not allowing time for study, discussion and more extensive hearings? Why should the electoral period dictate the deadline for such complex and crucially important decisions, decisions concerning issues of amalgamation and future existence of local government?

Why are major reports by Trimmer, Golden and Crombie on the future of our city being ignored? Why are the Tories showing such contempt not only for the Legislature but for me, a concerned citizen of Toronto? Why am I being made to feel an enemy of the provincial government because I seek more information, more time

for discussion and more responsiveness from my elected representatives?

Bewildered, I can only conclude that creating mass confusion and removing local control over local government will make it easier for the Harris government to download many costly programs on to municipal governments. To quote John Sewell, what the province has been unable to do through a democratic system, it now mandates by autocracy and arbitrary decision-making.

In the past, I myself, in ward 13, have experienced the democratic process at work in the city. Together with my community, school trustees and alderpersons, I have fought successfully to keep our small local public school open, to make a small local park a place safe from drug dropoffs and paedophiles, to keep our downtown residential area free of commercial and inappropriate development, to exert control over the design of a massive development to be built adjacent to our neighbourhood, the Marathon development of CPR lands, and to relocate a crosswalk for the safety of our school children.

I wonder how these and other local issues would be treated by the proposed megacity council. I wonder how it could possibly be as effective as our elected representatives. I fear that the high quality of life in Toronto neighbourhoods will decline if the Harris government abolishes responsive local councils such as this.

I now want to speak to this committee under another hat. As a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, I want to address the question of the artistic life of the city, especially dance, which I know best, in relation to local democracy.

Toronto is internationally known for the calibre of its major dance companies, the National Ballet of Canada and the Toronto Dance Theatre, but it is also known for the many remarkable smaller companies and independent dancers. Virtually all this dance activity is centred in downtown Toronto. It has been supported in the past by the two levels of government, municipal and Metro. There has been a logical and workable division of responsibility between them. However, local support clearly has a particular interest in local artistic activity. The Toronto Arts Council naturally has a particular interest in supporting and taking chances on dance endeavour in the city of Toronto. Metro, of necessity, is interested in making dance accessible in its own wider region. It has its own priorities, policies and needs. Metro has in fact recently had a 25% loss in arts funding.

We clearly have a rich and thriving cultural life in the city of Toronto, a cultural life which attracts not only Torontonians but also audiences from outside the city. I argue that to keep our artistic life vibrant, we need local elections and local politicians who will take an interest in Toronto artists and dancers and be accountable to the citizens of Toronto. As the protest song goes, we need bread, but we need roses too.

I would like to add one footnote to the subject of dancers and cities. During the 1960s, I danced in all the major cities of North America on tour with the National Ballet of Canada. Most of the theatres where we danced were located in downtown areas of those cities. Many of those downtown areas were desolate business areas, deserted by local residents and often poor. I remember

particularly the desolation of downtown Indianapolis, Hartford, Detroit and Cleveland. We, as young dancers, were often instructed to leave the theatre at night only in pairs, for safety.

I grieve, truly grieve, to think that Toronto might end up with such a derelict downtown area. To prevent this, I am here to plead for a democratically elected local government and against Bill 103. I know the democratic process is cumbersome and slow. As Churchill said, "Democracy is the worst system of government in the world except for all the others." Let us avoid all the others.

I want to close by quoting the words of Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn on his beloved Russia, reprinted recently in the *Globe and Mail*:

"The destructive course of events over the last decade has come about because the government, while ineptly imitating foreign models, has completely disregarded the country's creativity and particular character, as well as Russia's centuries-old spiritual and social traditions. Only if those paths are freed up can Russia be delivered from its near-fatal condition."

Solzhenitsyn eloquently sums up what I wanted to say here. I thank you for the chance to speak.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Allen, for coming forward.

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DORIS BRADLEY

The Chair: Ms Doris Bradley, please come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Ms Doris Bradley: I asked to speak to this committee as a concerned citizen and lifelong resident of the city of Toronto. In the 1960s and 1970s, I was an active member of the executive of the Bedford Park Residents' Association. I helped to elect Anne Johnston when she ran as an alderman and David Crombie when he first ran for mayor.

In the past 15 years or so I have been willing to sit back and let others strive to make Toronto a better place in which to live and work.

It used to be that when commissioned reports were brought in, the government of the day, which in the past 50 years has usually been a Progressive Conservative government, at least carefully considered the report and proceeded in the recommended direction to some extent. I do not remember any previous time that the government did the opposite of the recommendations.

Of all 25 reports listed in that paper, censured by the Speaker, that was delivered to every Metropolitan Toronto household two days after the bill was introduced, not one said, "Amalgamate the six municipalities." That is why I've become involved and am now on the steering committee for the Citizens for Local Democracy. I am in charge of the database of over 2,000 people who have signed in and/or sent copies of their letters to speak to this bill to us. One in eight on that database come from the other five municipalities in Metro; more than 30 come from the 905 area, and a few from beyond that. One of my regular phoners lives in Oakville.

The provincial government likes to dismiss us as the left, but I can assure you that there are many card-

carrying members of the Progressive Conservative Party not only involved but taking leadership roles in the campaign.

I do not intend to suggest where the city hall of a new Toronto should be or spend much time on how to constitute the community councils, as Mr Gilchrist requested on CBC Radio the other morning. These community councils would only be able to advise; they would have no power. How to choose members for these councils? To really represent the people of the area, individuals would have to run campaigns and be elected to these voluntary positions.

The power is with the people who control the money, and who will that be? Under this new bill, we would elect 44 councillors and a mayor. Would they control the money? No, the transition team would. The transition team, appointed by the cabinet and reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, would control the money and would have far-reaching powers, for example, to determine the organizational and staffing structure of the city, perhaps to privatize services, perhaps to dictate a 5% or 6% decrease in municipal taxes to the municipal council.

What is really draconian is the fact that none of the decisions of the transition team may be challenged in court. The Minister of Municipal Affairs would be able to seize \$1 billion in reserve funds of the current municipalities, and this bill does not give assurance that these funds would be used for the good of the citizens who provided them in their property taxes, as the amalgamation of Kingston did. The power would be with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, not with the council we the citizens would elect.

Let's talk about the Metro level of government. Metropolitan Toronto was created in the 1950s when the city of Toronto had Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough as its suburbs. Yes, there was some consolidation at that time. For example, smaller communities merged with Etobicoke and the city of Toronto and Leaside and East York were joined. Why was Metro created? There was a need for coordination of some services across the whole area, for example, police and ambulance services, transportation, including both Metro Roads and the TTC and social services.

Now in the 1990s the suburbs are communities such as Mississauga, Brampton, Richmond Hill, Markham and Pickering. What is needed now is a coordination of some services on a GTA-wide level. This GTA-wide coordinating body would have representatives from each of the communities in the area, just as the original Metro had representatives from the six municipalities.

Just last week Premier Harris, in response to the problem of downloading welfare on the municipalities, indicated that welfare could be downloaded on a GTA-wide basis rather than Metro. My thanks to the Premier for supporting my argument.

I now live in downtown Toronto, just a few blocks from the Legislature. The city of Toronto is a vibrant part of Metro. I'm sure you are aware that Toronto has been declared by *Fortune* magazine "the best city in the world in which to live and work."

How would this bill affect the cities and the taxpayers? Bill 103 would not reduce property taxes, and I say this without considering the proposed changes in education funding and the downloading of social housing etc. Once you get past the population base of one million there is a diseconomy of scale. Bigger government is bound to produce a bigger and more expensive bureaucracy. This results in it costing more to deliver services and being harder to react quickly to changing circumstances.

Bill 103 would force two urban styles into one jurisdiction. The older, compact city with its active street life and jumble of shops, apartments, houses and businesses defines Toronto, East York and York and contrasts sharply with the newer suburban style of low-density, single-use areas and reliance on automobile travel found in Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke. These two different city styles have different political cultures and demands. Cars versus public transit and community policing versus fast police responses are examples. Experience in Calgary, Edmonton and many American cities shows that the style of the older downtown gets wiped out in this arrangement. I'm sure you've heard of the doughnut effect.

I object to this government's disdain for public comment and public involvement as reflected in your refusal to move these hearings to the city halls at the cost of the cities involved. I appeal to the backbenchers of the Progressive Conservative Party to speak out and make a difference in caucus. Mr Kells, you have a long history with this party. You have been part of Progressive Conservative governments in the past which I have been pleased to call my government. Mr Hastings, I was at Thistletown when you gave your support to preserve that facility, which is the only centre that has provided services that make a difference to my autistic grandson. Mr Brown, you have had the courage to speak in public without sticking to the party line. I applaud you. Mr Parker, I met you at a book launch last year at the Toronto School of Theology and consider you to be a thoughtful family man. The citizens of each of your ridings need you to speak out on their behalf, not on behalf of big business interests.

What to do? Put aside this bill. Have the term of office for the sitting members of the seven involved councils extended by at least one year. You have raised the consciousness of the citizens to a level that has rarely been seen before. Let's work together — Queen's Park, the local councils and the citizens — to come up with a system that will save money and enhance what we currently have in the city of Toronto, East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough and York, as well as Mississauga, Brampton, Richmond Hill, Markham and Pickering.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. You've effectively used up your 10 minutes. I want to thank you for coming forward to make your presentation.

KATHLEEN MACPHERSON

The Chair: Kathleen Macpherson, please come forward. Good morning.

Mrs Kathleen Macpherson: I can't see you well and I can't hear well either. So, you ask, why on earth am I sitting here? I'm sitting here because I came to Toronto just as soon as I got married and arrived here in 1944. I thought perhaps to give you some idea of why I feel it is so important to keep Toronto as the best city, as has been quoted, and why to change the system as we now have been shown it might well be is not in very good order for continuing the life that I feel has been extraordinarily valuable to all of us.

To go back to 1944 when Toronto was known as Toronto the Good — oh, I should pay tribute to the people who have spoken before me, because you have had the facts beautifully laid before you, and I know you will get many more instances of why we all feel this bill is questionable, to say the least. So my reminiscing can just be a slight intermission for more facts to come later.

I came here in 1944. Toronto was "the Good." Nothing happened on Sundays. It was closed down. Very little happened elsewhere a good deal of the time anyway. I started my interest in what was going on in the city by being told that if I wanted to go out while my husband looked after the baby, I could go to a meeting across the street of something called the Association of Women Electors.

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The Association of Women Electors was a group of women, mostly middle-aged with children in school, or perhaps retired, who took it upon themselves to learn something about how the city was run. What they did was observe the city council meetings and the board of education meetings and make their own assessments of what went on, regardless of what the actual minutes said, and they wrote reports for any interested citizens to find out what went on behind the scenes. Those women electors had observers at every council meeting and every board meeting.

I think they began in the late 1930s and they finally came to rest about three years ago when either most of the originals were dying off or they found that the city's activities had become the interest of far more citizens' and more ratepayers' groups. There were none when we started. More interest groups took the initiative to participate in city affairs, and the communication between the elected representatives and their electors was good enough that it was possible to meet the mayor, to talk to the mayor, to know your councillors well and to feel that you participated in the affairs of the city.

The women electors led on to demonstrate that when women got interested — and this, remember, was before the women's movement as such had become designated in this part of the world — a number went on to take responsible positions. One of them has been mayor of Toronto; another one has been head of the library board; another one has done a great deal for public housing; and others. So the education of women went side by side with the education of the citizens of Toronto.

From there on, other activities evolved. I'm just trying to think of examples where the change has been so remarkable that we can notice. City council meetings were not the well-attended affairs that now happen, let alone the over-attended affairs that have been going on.

Nobody went to see what the city council was doing. The board of education met in the evenings and occasionally had one or two teachers seeing what was happening. The attention and the involvement of citizens has followed the general trend of trying to find out and know more about one's city.

I feel it is essential that we keep the contact and the connections between our elected representatives and the citizens themselves. From the point of view of the method by which this bill has been introduced, I can only say that I can remember far enough back to the goings-on of the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s, and I don't wish to see the Hitlerization or the kinds of things that went on as a result of arbitrary action by groups of citizens who were not even necessarily elected.

I'd like to stop talking, because there are many people who have more facts to present you with. But my plea is that the personal connection between the citizens and their elected representatives is a vitally important part of keeping our city the best in the world, or whatever we think we are, and to wish you well in trying to change the direction your government has seen fit to go with this bill.

The Chair: Mrs Macpherson, there is some time left. Would you care to entertain some questions?

Mrs Macpherson: I can try.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Thank you, Mrs Macpherson, for coming down. It's quite good for us to get some historic perspective on this. I certainly know of your long-standing commitment and work and dedication to women's rights as well as the life of the city. I very much appreciate your coming down today to speak to us briefly about that.

I wonder if you can very briefly, because there's such little time, tell me what your biggest concern is. There are a lot of concerns expressed, but with your historical knowledge of seeing the workings of years ago, what is your biggest fear about this amalgamation proposal?

Mrs Macpherson: It's very important that as many people as possible feel that they have a stake and a part in what is going on in their city. One way, and we haven't always made the most use of it, is the connection between our elected representatives and the people themselves and to know that I myself could be in that position of the person we have elected to speak for us. If we lose that and it goes off into the dim and distant horizon, I think we're going to find we're losing our sense of, I guess, ownership of the city that we all enjoy living in so much.

I shouldn't say that, because a lot of people don't enjoy living in the city, and I think part of the whole thing is that the people who value the city do and should have a responsibility for all those who are not enjoying the city's living as much as they are. I think we're losing our humanity in cutting out this concern for other people, one of the connections being our elected representatives to express our feelings when we want action taken to help the unfortunate, whoever they happen to be. Whether they're the windshield wipers of today or the families who can't find homes, we need to be responsible for them, and I think we'd lose it if we lost these connections with the closeness of our own city.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs Macpherson, for coming forward this morning and making your presentation.

Mrs Macpherson: Thank you for having me.

1010

ZOE GIRLING

The Chair: Would Zoe Girling please come forward. Good morning and welcome to the committee.

Ms Zoe Girling: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me this opportunity of talking to you in this open and democratic style. With thousands of others, I hope the outcome of this and the other meetings you have scheduled, and hopefully more that you will schedule, will be a reaffirmation and a demonstration of the democratic process itself, its flexibility and capacity for change.

We've just had an example, another one, in the short time the hearings have gone on so far of the wonderful listening and learning we have been offered. I repeat what Mrs Macpherson has just said about the information so many of the speakers have already provided and which I don't think I'm going to be able to add to conspicuously, so I too have to offer you a more personal angle on what's been happening.

This wonderful fund of knowledge that has come forth is indeed the boon, and both supporters and opponents of Bill 103 will acknowledge your megacity project has galvanized all kinds of people into action and speech. On the spot, this has produced a fund of expert knowledge and informed opinion, as well as a treasury of lived experience and the wisdom this has given rise to. It is not only thankless but perilous, I believe, to refuse the understanding such testimony makes available.

Many, perhaps most, of us in the lay public who oppose Bill 103 base our opposition on the strongest of foundations: an idea of democracy which finds abhorrent a process, which we hope you will withdraw from, in which unelected officials are appointed, in this case by the provincial power, to displace elected representatives. This is only the first stage in the effective removal of authority from city councils, here and now the city council of Toronto, although it has the sanction of 200 years of productive practice, and the other five cities which together with Toronto comprise Metro.

The rushing of the legislation, its ruthlessness and the government's declaration that it may hear but will not heed the arguments relevant to its bill are indicators of a fundamentally anti-democratic attitude — frightening.

On the megacity itself, the changes the plan proposes are so far-reaching, so hard to imagine in meaningful detail, that one feels oneself being held at gunpoint. Please pause long enough to allow those most immediately affected and other interested people and yourselves to consider all, or at least some, other options.

People are not opposed to change in itself; most of your opponents are prepared to recognize where it is necessary or desirable when a case is reasonably presented. The Premier said a few days ago that some of the proposed funding changes, for example, for welfare, are not etched in stone. As these are intimately bound up

with Toronto and the megacity proposal, we must take this as hope for an extension of the time available for discussion. The Premier has said repeatedly that the government will not be moved from its intention to amalgamate the cities of Toronto unless there is what he calls "some new information" to deflect it.

"Information, opinion, belief." These are the words we hear. The minister "strongly believes" amalgamation will be good for Toronto. Is this the same as "common sense"? Why is this moment a "unique opportunity"? Does the government fear some imminent change? What is, where is, which is the "information" his strong belief is based on? May we, the general public of Toronto, have access to it before we consent to its overriding of our own strong wishes — I'll come back to these, especially to my own — and our own strong beliefs, which come from our own experience in our own active neighbourhoods and from what we've been able to take in imperfectly under this duress from the testimony of highly qualified professionals: administrators, engineers, architects, planners and economists, as well as scholars and practitioners in the social sciences and the arts.

I come to my own more personal angle now. Toronto was a place of happy landing for us, my family and me, almost 35 years ago. We came from Johannesburg, South Africa, to Toronto in Canada. We came from tyranny to freedom. It was extraordinary. From my own student days in the 1940s on, from the deep hostility I then learned about, even between universities, even on the sports fields, I discovered the painful frustration of trying vainly to penetrate the armour of ideology. It separated whites — I skip the ugly vocabulary of the racial divisions of South Africa — from whites and whites from blacks, it designated races in ways you've all heard about and separated each from the possibility of living harmoniously, let alone creatively, with the others. It cramped everyone.

When we left South Africa in 1962 the apartheid regime was at a height of power. Violent crime was increasing. The possibilities of life were narrowing all the time, constricting. Great performers who used to come from overseas no longer wanted to visit. All this kind of thing was narrowing. Nelson Mandela was in jail. And here was Toronto: no tall buildings yet at the corner of Yonge and Bloor; a Toronto still remembering what Mrs Macpherson has just described to us, its existence as Toronto the Good; a Toronto not yet in possession of the city hall, though I think it was already in the competition stage, the city hall which spoke and speaks so eloquently of the city's energy and aspiration; an orderly city and a city which had moved into the expansive mode.

It is impossible to imagine that in these years Toronto could have developed the way it has, little by little, without the checks and balances of a vibrant inner city life and its intimately associated local government coping with the problems of growth and of redistribution and so on, with its own resources to pay for what it wants, such as an unemployment initiative we heard about today or that once very controversial sculpture on Nathan Phillips Square, The Archer. One of Toronto's conspicuous achievements has been its success in integrating newcomers from a wide diversity of origins and bringing

together a galaxy of gifts and talents. Which other city presents dramas in so many languages? Which other city sends its experts across the world to work in so many fields?

There has to be some magic about a successful city. A Florence, an Athens, a San Francisco, an Edinburgh, each has its own intensity; each is unique; each has a proud history. One may compare the effect of a city to the concentration of a burning glass. The forces and possibilities of a wide area and of miscellaneous endeavours are brought into such a fierce focus that they fuse into a new and unexpected achievement. Toronto has done it. Toronto can continue to do it, but not without the basic means; that is, an appreciable and time-honoured independence of funding and administration, and not if the intensity is smothered by mistaken economy, puny ambitions and unworthy programs.

Let Toronto be itself, with somewhat changed boundaries perhaps but essentially the concentrated core city, and allow Toronto to allow the other cities, its neighbouring cities of Metro, not to mention all the nearly 900 municipalities of Ontario, to be themselves too.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Girling. You've effectively used your 10 minutes. I appreciate you coming forward to make your presentation today.

1020

GRAHAM SMITH

The Chair: Would Graham Smith please come forward. Good morning, Mr Smith.

Mr Graham Smith: I come to you on many levels. I'm a small business owner here in Toronto. I employ seven people, a virtual reality company. We're expanding rapidly. This is a new field. I'm glad to be in Toronto because it's a great place to do business in this country. I'm an inventor. I hold two patents in the field of virtual reality and am currently filing more patents for new inventions I'm coming up with. I'm also a U of T researcher. I worked at the McLuhan program in culture and technology, looking at how technology affects society and issues related to that. I'm also a father of two children and I've been a resident here for about 18 years.

The issue of amalgamation is to me simply a smokescreen for the takeover of all democratically elected municipal bodies in this city. You talk about cost savings and privatization, but this is simply a media façade. The real issue is about creating a crisis situation where a non-elected body can seize power and obtain powers above the law. In other countries they call it a coup d'état. It was one of the Tory MPPs, John Snobelen, last year who was quoted as saying he was going to create a crisis in education to bring about change. Maybe that's where the seed of this legislation came from.

My main problem with the legislation is the definition of appointees who are above the law. In subsection 12(1) it states, "The decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." What legal precedent can you give for such a piece of legislation? Why do appointees need such incredible powers? Has this power ever been granted before, except during wartime? Apart from the federal government's War Measures Act, Bill 103 is the most far-reaching,

anti-democratic legislation ever introduced. My question is, where is the war?

Subsection 12(2) states: "The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to the board of trustees." What does this mean? Can anyone even tell me what this means? What is the Statutory Powers Procedure Act? Does it mean that the transition team and the appointees can hire whoever they like without being accountable?

Reserve funds: In the legislation the amalgamation of the three municipalities in the Kingston area was very specific about what can happen to reserve funds. The minister's order says that reserve funds can be kept and used only for the benefit of the taxpayers of the former cities in which the revenues were generated. In Bill 103, there are no such assurances for Toronto. Why the difference? What is stopping the transition team from simply taking that money and giving it to the government? We are talking about \$1 billion here. Why is there a difference between Kingston and Toronto? This is your legislation.

Harris lied to the people. During the election campaign, Premier Harris lied and said in Elora, was quoted in the Elora newspaper as saying, he was against amalgamation. He did not think larger was better, that megacities were the wrong way to go. The people of Elora believed him. What crisis has taken place to make him go back on his word?

You have no mandate. Where in your Common Sense Revolution literature is there any mention of the creation of a megacity? You have no mandate for these sweeping changes.

To end this presentation, I want to thank the Tory government for introducing this legislation. Metro Toronto is a sleepy town. It takes a lot to get people involved in political issues, especially during a cold February. The amazing thing is that people from all walks of life are now uniting, talking about these issues, forming committees and coming together to stop this draconian legislation, and stop it we will.

I now see seniors from Mississauga talking to teens from York. All over this city people are rising up. Just as the population of Belgrade has taken to the streets to stop a government that does not listen to reason, the people of Toronto are waking up to this legislation's harsh reality.

I ask each member of this committee to momentarily put aside their personal feelings about amalgamation. It is a complex issue which needs to be debated in full. It's an incredibly complex issue. The real issue is the fact that Bill 103 tries to put in place dictatorial bodies that are above the law, acting in private.

Each of you must research this bill and look deep inside yourselves to determine if this is just and right. We live in a democratic society with checks and balances and this bill attempts to destroy that tradition. By supporting this bill you are supporting the destruction of democratic principles that go back hundreds of years. Please take the time to read and understand what you are voting for because the population of this city is waking up. Common sense says that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Report after report states that Toronto is one of a handful of cities that actually work. Why make such radical changes? What is the crisis you are trying to

create? If this experiment you call Bill 103 fails, we will be again making the cover of magazines like *Fortune*, but it will be as a disaster which did not have to happen.

Every level of society is asking for consultation, from the board of trade to David Crombie, who you appointed to look into this. Such wide-ranging change must be open to public input from the people who are directly affected by this change.

This legislation, the appointees, it's incredible. I just do not understand the precedent you are taking in this. Can you give me any examples of other bills where people are above the law in this way?

People are waking up to this and people are getting really angry. The amalgamation is simply a smokescreen and people are now realizing that, and people are not going to stand for it. You cannot take away people's democratic rights the way this bill is and expect people to just sit down and have it shoved down their throats.

If anyone here can tell me what the Statutory Powers Procedure Act is, I would be very interested in knowing what that is and what it means that the transition team and the appointees do not have to abide by that act. Is there anyone here can tell me what that is?

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation. The Conservative caucus is up to ask questions and maybe Mr Gilchrist can. You have just over two minutes, Mr Gilchrist, for any comments or questions.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Thank you, Mr Smith. You've raised a number of questions. I was getting clarification from the legal counsel.

You asked for other examples. For example, every member of the Ontario civil service is immune from prosecution as long as they're doing work within the scope of their defined duties. That's 84,000 people in this province who have exactly the same rights as the trustees have been given here. This bill speaks only to protection for the trustees if they do work within the context of their defined duties. That is totally consistent with anyone else in the civil service.

In terms of some of the other issues you've raised, the board of trade and Mr Crombie are totally on side with the City of Toronto Act. They are 100% in support of the amalgamation to one city. They have a concern —

Interruption.

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr Gilchrist: Their only concern was with the transfer of services and that is not part of this bill. In terms of the City of Toronto Act, the board of trade was very clear. Mr Fierheller, the president, is totally on side.

Mr Smith: One question. What is the Statutory Powers Procedure Act?

Mr Gilchrist: That's a fairly technical question. It has to do with the rules of procedure for how they hold their own meetings. It's purely technical. Would legal counsel wish to elaborate on that?

Mr Paul Jones: For the record, my name is Paul Jones. I'm manager of local government policy with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I am not legal counsel, sir.

Mr Gilchrist: Sorry.

Mr Jones: The Statutory Powers Procedure Act specifies certain statutory requirements with respect to hear-

ings where there is a decision made of a judicial nature — granting of a licence, for example — and municipal council has to comply with the Statutory Powers Procedure Act.

Other hearings do not. Hearings that are deemed to be more of a political nature as opposed to an administrative nature, planning board decisions, decisions of a planning nature made by municipal council are not subject to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act.

Mr Gilchrist: I guess the only other thing I would want to —

Mr Smith: What about the reserve funds? Why the difference between Kingston and Toronto?

Mr Gilchrist: The minister was very clear when this bill was introduced that the transition team would work with the existing city staff and ensure that all those other details are worked out well before the 11 months are up. In fact, he was very clear, there will be a second City of Toronto Act that will deal with the specifics that are found in the Kingston legislation. Clearly those reserves are in most cases tied to specific liabilities or debentures. They can't be misappropriated. The fact of the matter is that there is no intention on the part of the government to do anything different with Toronto than was done with Kingston.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Smith, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee today.
1030

Mr Colle: On a point of order, Mr Chairman: A member of the government staff spoke and I'd like to ask a question based on the presentation the government staff member made, a clarification.

The Chair: That's not a point of order.

Mr Gilchrist: That's not a point of order.

Mr Colle: Well, a point of privilege then.

Interjection.

Mr Colle: Who is the Chair? Is it Mr Gilchrist or you, Mr Chairman?

The Chair: Clearly I'm the Chair. Do you have a point of privilege? Your first point of order wasn't a point of order. Is it a point of privilege?

Mr Colle: Is that his ruling or your ruling?

The Chair: My ruling. Can I have your point of privilege, please.

Mr Colle: My point of privilege is that there is a critical question asked in terms of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act and what it entails. The parliamentary assistant brought forward a member of the government staff of municipal affairs to explain it. I think it's critical that we get an explanation of what this act is from a legal authority, because Mr Jones identified himself as not a lawyer. It is my understanding that the statutory powers act in essence allows government bodies to operate according to the laws of natural justice. By eliminating the statutory powers act provisions it is saying the transition team, the trusteeship, doesn't have to abide by the laws of natural justice. That's why I think it's critical that we get a definition from a legal authority, and not Mr Jones or Mr Gilchrist, in terms of the implications of this.

The Chair: That's fine. Your request is one that's often made in committees, as you know, and we can ask

research staff to come back with a written response to that question. I will ask research staff to undertake that.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Further to that, if I may, Mr Chair, I would request that a member of the legal staff be present all during the presentations so that if there are any questions, we can ask the legal staff.

The Chair: I will put that request forward to the ministry.

JOANNE NAIMAN

The Chair: Joanne Naiman, please come forward. Welcome.

Ms Joanne Naiman: As you know, this is a little nerve-racking. I'll just take a little drink before I start.

The Chair: You have 10 minutes to make your presentation and you can use that time as you see fit. At the end of your presentation, if there's time remaining, the Liberal caucus will be allowed to ask some questions.

Ms Naiman: I don't think I'll use my full time. I hope I'll be brief. Just to explain who I am, I'm a lifelong resident of the city of Toronto, the central city, born here almost 51 years ago, and was educated and have worked in the city all my life. I'm currently a professor of sociology at Ryerson.

Many others have already spoken and I'm sure will be speaking in the next few weeks about how Bill 103 will harm the people of this city and of this province. Frankly, from the behaviour I've seen from this government up till now, the arrogance the leaders of this government have shown, they're not the least bit interested, really, in hearing such arguments nor are they about to be swayed by them. We had Minister Leach yesterday tell us that these proceedings won't change his mind.

I'm here today to appeal to you to change this bill, not for the people of Toronto, not for others, but for yourselves. I'm probably going to take a little different tack here than many others, but I'm going to argue that out of pure self-interest this government should withdraw this bill since it is this government that will ultimately be harmed by it. Let me explain.

As a social scientist I'm taught to look beneath the surface of things and to try to make sense of social phenomena. As I try to assess the true purpose of this sweeping, undemocratic bill in terms of the government's perception, the government's self-interest, I think to myself, are they trying to get elected again? Is that what it's about? Are they trying to appease their friends in business by ultimately cheapening the cost of labour, privatizing government enterprises and removing all government barriers to profit maximization, what's been described by many as the neo-conservative agenda? Is that what it's about?

Maybe it's connected to the comments David Rockefeller made in 1973 to the Trilateral Commission that the main problem facing humankind at that time was a global "excess of democracy." Since local levels of government are by their very nature closest to the people, they must be the first to be eroded, and thus it was that Margaret Thatcher dismantled the London city council.

Is that how we're proceeding? Is that what this government has in mind? Perhaps it's any of these things, all these reasons, or perhaps it's others. I can't imagine.

But why then is this bill against the self-interest of this government? As every scientist knows, not only social science but the physical sciences, every action has a reaction. This bill, as one small part of the neo-conservative agenda, is guaranteed sooner or later to have that reaction. As the previous speaker said, it's already begun. We've begun to see increasing social unrest, labour unrest, the marches from the Days of Action, increased social activism in this city which is unprecedented in this city, and increased social instability.

The very stability that big business craves will not be met by this agenda. We've got Mike Harris spending \$50 million of our tax dollars going on CNN, I heard this morning, to promote this city. No business is going to want to come to a city with this kind of social upheaval. It has money down the tubes, frankly. Of course some business people have already said this to the government. It's been noticed. Some, such as the Toronto board of trade, have openly asked the government to rethink its policies.

At the most basic level, as the consequences of this government's policies become increasingly clear, more and more Ontarians are likely to look to other parties in the next election for greater social stability and more support for their social needs; in other words, for a party that's going to listen to them. If you want to look elsewhere to see what's likely to happen, as the previous speaker said, look to Belgrade, look to South Korea. People do eventually respond to anti-democratic process.

Why then is this government persisting in pursuing policies which few enlightened people, including some of its closest friends and allies, seem to support? Why will it not show largess by backing off now in the face of widespread public hostility to its position? While I was getting this together last night, I did the academic thing and went to my bookshelf and found a book I had read some years ago, by American historian Barbara Tuchman, called *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. It's a very fascinating book about governments which continue on wrongheaded paths even when it is against their own self-interest to do so, paths that eventually, you should note, lead to their own demise. Her words seem more relevant than ever. I'd like to read them to you, and I urge the members of this committee and of the Progressive Conservative Party to seriously consider them. There are bits and pieces that I've pulled together to make them coherent. This is Barbara Tuchman now:

"A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests. Mankind, it seems, makes a poorer performance of government than of almost any other human activity. In this sphere, wisdom, which may be defined as the exercise of judgment acting on experience, common sense" — be it noted — "and available information, is less operative and more frustrated than it should be. Why do holders of high office so often act contrary to the way reason points and enlightened self-interest suggest? Why does intelligent mental process seem so often not to function?...

"Mental standstill or stagnation — the maintenance intact by rulers and policymakers of the ideas they started

with — is fertile ground for folly.... In the first stage, mental standstill fixes the principles and boundaries governing a political problem. In the second stage, when dissonances and failing function begin to appear, the initial principles rigidify. This is the period when, if wisdom were operative, re-examination and re-thinking and a change of course are possible, but they are rare as rubies in a backyard. Rigidifying leads to increase of investment and the need to protect egos; policy founded upon error multiplies, never retreats. The greater the investment and the more involved in it the sponsor's ego, the more unacceptable is disengagement. In the third stage, pursuit of failure enlarges the damages....

"A principle that emerges [in this process] is that folly is a child of power. We all know, from unending repetitions of Lord Acton's dictum, that power corrupts. We are less aware that it breeds folly; that the power to command frequently causes failure to think, that the responsibility of power often fades as its exercise augments. The overall responsibility of power is to govern as reasonably as possible in the interest of the state and its citizens. A duty in that process is to keep well-informed, to heed information, to keep mind and judgment open and to resist the insidious spell of wooden-headedness. If the mind is open enough to perceive that a given policy is harming rather than serving self-interest, and self-confident enough to acknowledge it, and wise enough to reverse it, that is a summit in the art of government."

1040

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): Thank you for your presentation. With the fact that the Premier has said that referendums are irrelevant as far as this issue is concerned — finally we did convince the government to hold proceedings such as this morning — do you think it's a waste of time, that the government's mind is made up, it's going to go through with this and it couldn't care less about the people of Toronto?

Ms Naiman: This is a very difficult question to answer, because on the one hand one might say it's a waste of time; on the other hand I do believe in democracy, however limited democracy may be. I don't want us to give up what limited rights we've been given at this point at least to make our voices heard, so that when that democracy is taken away from us — that's why I'm here today.

I'll maybe give a bit of my background. Growing up as a young Jewish girl in Toronto in the 1950s, I was seized with how good people could let terrible things happen during the war. I was seized with it. I feel we have to speak out and that it's very important, because you don't go to bed one night with democracy and wake up with it gone. It's taken away piece by piece by piece, and we have to fight it every step of the way.

The Chair: Ms Naiman, I want to thank you for coming forward to make your presentation today.

JOCELYN STRATTON

The Chair: Would Jocelyn Stratton please come forward? Welcome, Ms Stratton.

Ms Jocelyn Stratton: Before I begin, I would like to tell the committee that I am legally blind and ask you to

bear with me if I have a little bit of difficulty reading my notes.

Mr Chair and members of the committee, it is not easy for me to be here today. I'm completely unused to doing anything of this kind. My life is filled with grandchildren, lectures, hobbies and travel. Frankly, this is not my idea, as the young people say, of a fun thing to do.

I have always voted according to the information I could gather, and I have always voted, but never have I been politically active. However, I am here to speak to the committee today because I believe it is very important to talk to you. I believe in democracy and I love Toronto.

When Bill 103 first came to my attention, a wild supposition came to my mind: What if it were suddenly to be known that the country of New Zealand — and I chose New Zealand because it has the same population as Metro Toronto — had handed over its government to three appointed trustees who would be able to govern for a year with arbitrary retroactive powers, with no way to challenge any of their decisions? The United Nations would resound with outcries against this usurpation of democracy. But that is exactly what is happening to us, the citizens of Toronto. Just because we are a city, not a country, doesn't make it any more a curtailment of our democratic rights. Bill 103 strips us, for a period of time, of the precious right to be represented by elected and not appointed persons.

When people realize that their inherited and established democratic rights are being abrogated, they must take a stand; they must bear witness; they must protest. I feel that obligation.

I will not mention the politics of a political party standing for local government and for referenda before the election and then being against those things after the election. That is just politics. However, changing the form of government from that of duly elected representation to that of appointed and largely untouchable trustees is quite another thing. It is akin to taxation without representation. It is a kind of dictatorship. It is a loss of democracy. It goes beyond the game of politics and enters the realm of our system of government, diminishing our democratic system.

It is understandable that members of the Legislature wish to make Ontario prosper. We all wish for that. It is even understandable if they want to help especially their friends to prosper. It is absolutely and completely intolerable that democracy should be set aside to this end.

Have the members here today realized that power is being taken from city councillors and handed over to the board of trustees? Section 9 of Bill 103 gives trustees the power to monitor the actions of council, to revise, amend and approve all expenditures. The decisions of trustees are taken behind closed doors. Trustees are not permitted to speak to the press. It is our taxpayers' money that is being decided upon. No elected councils have ever had such power. How can you, in conscience, allow such a bill?

I have stated that I am here for two reasons. First, I believe in democracy. Second, I love Toronto, and I'm not alone. I think most of those who live in Toronto love it. Certainly those who visit it admire it. As you know,

Fortune magazine has voted it to be the best city in North America in which to do business. Does the present government wish Toronto to maintain that reputation? If it does, why change things?

As a concerned Torontonians I ask the following questions: Is there an urgent need for drastic change? It would seem not. Is there a widespread demand for change? Absolutely not. Have many studies and reports recommended this amalgamation? No. Are there many examples of cities successfully governed with populations of over one million? No. Is there a single example of a city of Metro's size which is more successful than Toronto? There is not. In short all arguments for amalgamation are based on undemonstrated predictions. All arguments against amalgamation are based on sound evidence.

I think this point is so crucial to the argument on amalgamation that I will say it again: All arguments in favour of amalgamation are promises, only promises. All arguments against amalgamation are based on facts and evidence. The promises that amalgamation will save money are only promises.

It is therefore quite beyond reason that amalgamation is being forced upon us here in Metro Toronto. The exorbitant cost in money, energy and time to restructure the government is terrible to contemplate. Such a huge expenditure might make sense if there were some kind of guarantee that it would be worthwhile, but all reports and evidence show that Bill 103 would escalate costs and impair service. Is this common sense? Is this business-smart?

I love Metro Toronto, and it breaks my heart to realize what will happen to it, should Bill 103 pass. It also angers me that such an irrational and arbitrary bill can even be proposed.

I want to urge the committee to consider the long-term costs if Bill 103 is passed into law. Toronto will cease to be a vibrant, healthy, responsive, Canadian city and become a huge, overblown, impoverished, ill-administered imitation of Chicago or LA. We should, all of us together, celebrate, congratulate and support this wonderful urban centre as it is. After all, thousands of US citizens do just that when they visit.

What can this committee do? I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, not to report this bill back to the Legislature. Let it die. Let Metropolitan Toronto live.

1050

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

Interruption.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen. We have just about a minute and a half for questions.

Ms Stratton: Do I have a minute to add something?

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Stratton: As I have a little time left, perhaps this committee would like to have reported to it a joke that is currently passing around. The question is, what is worse than sexual harassment? The answer is Mike Harrisment. This is important. Members of the committee may want to reflect that when people feel themselves under a repressive and undemocratic kind of government, jokes of this kind gain coinage.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation this morning.

WAYNE OLSON

The Chair: Would Wayne Olson please come forward. Good morning, Mr Olson. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Wayne Olson: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to address the committee today. I'm here wearing a number of hats: as a citizen of Toronto, as a parent, as a small business owner, and I'm here as a practising architect in the city of Toronto.

I'm here for two main reasons. First I want to express my concern, and even more strongly, if I may, my anger and even outrage at the tactics and what I see, at least, quite clearly as being misinformation being used by the government to push Bill 103 and the associated downloading legislation into law. This is happening in the face of what seems to me to be virtually unprecedented citizen business and expert concern and opposition.

As an example I refer to the pamphlet we're all familiar with produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing which shows contempt, as per Speaker Stockwell's ruling, for parliamentary process, indicating that the government's proposals follow logically from numerous past studies. One only has to hear David Crombie, Anne Golden, Jack Diamond and other authors of these reports to know that this is not completely true. The government also demonstrates abundant contempt for its citizens.

My second reason for appearing before you is to request as forcefully as I can that Bill 103 and related downloading legislation be withdrawn pending further review and consultation. As a citizen of Toronto, a city of some 600,000 people, I value my local municipal government. I value the significance of being on a first-name basis with my local councillor, whether or not I happen to agree with his politics. I value the symbol of democracy that is Toronto's city hall. I value the local parks, the wading pools and the skating rinks. I value the libraries, the recreation centres, all with programs and services tailored to the needs of my neighbourhood and funded out of my city of Toronto taxes at less than \$2 per day. I ask you to respect my passion for my city by withdrawing Bill 103.

As a parent I want my two young children to grow up understanding and respecting the principle of democracy. I want them to believe that our government works for us and not the other way around. I want my kids to have faith that consultation and discussion and debate are respected in our society, and in return I want them to be able to respect and support their governments and their elected representatives. I ask you to preserve this respect by withdrawing Bill 103.

As a small business owner I want to work and do business in a city that is safe and humane and enriching. I want a local government that understands the dynamics, needs and benefits of small business in an urban city like Toronto. I want to pay taxes at a reasonable level, reflecting the efficiencies inherent in an older and more compact city to an accountable government. I ask you to act to preserve this locally based, supportive environment for small business by withdrawing Bill 103.

As an architect I believe in a logical and consultative change and design process. I must listen to my clients or I am negligent. I must base my design recommendations

on facts and professional experience or I am incompetent. In this case we, the citizens, are the client. The government is the architect, and the obligation of the government, I believe, is to propose a defensible, affordable and desired renovation plan for local democracy.

Say that an architect is looking at six adjacent houses on the street, like six municipalities in Metro Toronto: neighbours, yes, but with different histories, lifestyles and renovation needs. One may want to rebuild, another wants a new kitchen while another only wants a paint job. A responsible architect would listen to all the clients' needs and propose tailored solutions, perhaps suggesting that they may use some of the same contractors for economies of scale but respecting the individual character of the homes and the clients. But in this case our hypothetical architect, who happens to have extraordinary powers, unilaterally decides that all the properties will be assembled into a single parcel, that demolition will commence immediately and that a new dormitory will be constructed in the place of the previous varied house forms. The clients can still live there. Indeed they are forced to continue to pay rent, but there is no consultation and there is no appeal. This is clearly not responsible or professional. I ask you to restore faith both in a logical planning process and in true and democratic consultation by withdrawing Bill 103.

The government being slated for destruction is my government. The politicians slated for extinction are my politicians. This is my city hall, these are my parks, my services, my bylaws and my tax dollars. Is anyone surprised that I and others like me are angry? Thousands of other Toronto residents feel as strongly as I do, and I've seen them at meetings. Many other Ontarians are also seriously offended by what is seen as being undemocratic and arrogant action. I believe that if the government proceeds with the stated agenda and time frame, irreparable harm will have been done not only to the municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto but to public respect for government in Ontario.

The government has a choice: to proceed with the reckless haste we've seen so far, risk the full range of fallout, politically in the short term and perpetually in the history books; or alternatively to demonstrate that you are a government that is willing to listen and to consider alternatives. The opportunity for constructive consultation and consensus building may now exist. Everyone, residents, politicians and bureaucrats alike, has been shocked out of their complacency. I hope that the government will seize the opportunity by withdrawing Bill 103 and by initiating a true consensus-building process.

Applause.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Order, please. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you'd hold your applause to a minimum. Mr Silipo, we have about three minutes for questions.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Mr Olson, thanks for your presentation. One of the things that has been mentioned this morning — I want to just put this forward as one potential way, if the government members are listening, they may be able to find to back down from the kind of corner they seem to have painted themselves into — is that, as you know, there will be a referendum

taking place in Metropolitan Toronto which will give people a way to express their views.

The irony of this whole situation is that even today — this isn't a question of the Tories having promised to be in favour of referenda before the election and now being against this referendum — even this afternoon, while this committee will continue its hearings here in this room, in another committee room only steps away we will be dealing with the proposal from the same government to actually set in place a referendum law.

The contradiction is incredible, and it just continues to be apparent at every turn. On this one the government refuses to listen to the people, but on many other fronts they're saying they want to have a referendum law. Do you see the referendum process as at least being a way that Mike Harris and company can say, "If people are actually opposed to this megacity concept, just maybe we can hold back and take a look at what the other alternatives are"?

Mr Olson: The referendum is going to be a legitimate expression of community and citizen opinion. One may argue about the technicalities and the details of it, but by and large the result will be a legitimate expression of community concern. I think the government is obligated ethically, if not legally, to take that into account and I hope it will.

1100

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): Mr Olson, Minister Leach says people worry that local government will be less accessible; he says the opposite is true. He also says the new act will create neighbourhood committees that would give citizens a chance to be directly involved in the issues and then he says, "The way we see it, with a single united system of government in Toronto, a direct line can be created from neighbourhoods straight to the very top." Don't you feel comforted by that?

Mr Olson: These proposed neighbourhood committees are not elected; they're not accountable. The difference between the Metro level of government now and the local levels of government in terms of accessibility and a sense of connection with the population: To see that difference one only has to attend the various city halls and then attend Metro Hall and look at the difference in attendance. I think you'll see which level of government people feel the closest to.

Mr Marchese: There are plenty of other questions that Mr Leach raises. He says: "We have also heard comment that the government is rushing this legislation through without consultation. Again, the opposite is true. We based our decision to act on years of research, debate and public discussion. That includes the work of the GTA task force. And the consultation carried out by the GTA review panel on the task force." He also says, "Amalgamation of some local municipalities has been recommended by...mayors," as well. "We've had a lot of research," he says. "We've done a lot of consultation. We're not rushing through this." Is that your sense?

Mr Olson: I would like to see a synopsis or a summary of the recommendations of these various reports presented by the government as a basis for the content and the approach of Bill 103. I haven't seen that. I've seen a list of these reports and that has been used as an

argument for Bill 103, but I haven't seen the recommendations directly related to Bill 103 and I think there's a missing link there.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Olson, for coming forward.

EDNA-CATHERINE RYERSON

The Chair: Good morning, Ms Ryerson, and welcome to the committee.

Mrs Edna-Catherine Ryerson: I am happy to be here this morning and to express the fact that I've always felt privileged to be a homeowner in the city of Toronto, taxes or no. I am appreciative of the education I received along with others during the years David Crombie was the mayor. He helped us assume responsibility for making our city a better place in which to live, to participate, to speak up, to have a say, to organize neighbourhood ratepayer and community groups, and to work with and influence our elected representatives for the common good. That education stands and is helpful today when we face this amalgamation threat.

Our city changed immensely after the Second World War. There was a steady arrival of people from Europe, the Caribbean and Asia and the city became livelier, more colourful, less rigid and there was an enthusiasm and an eagerness to meet the challenges of the day. We needed a subway. Underneath Yonge Street was the perfect route, but when it was extended many thought the north-south should be under Bathurst Street. It was not to be. We had tried to change the minds of the TTC, but the developers had won out. The heavy traffic is still on Bathurst Street.

The widening of Bathurst Street was proposed, and we won that one because we unitedly didn't want any more speedways directly into the city. The Spadina expressway was finally stopped at Eglinton Avenue. The opposition to the Spadina expressway was a mammoth effort on the part of people who treasure our city and who did and will protect it.

Should the city hall, designed by Lennox, be torn down? The nays won out. Could we save the original small TD Bank on King Street, a marvel in handwork with bronze posts in the individual tellers' cages, mouldings three feet high joining wall and ceiling? No. We lost out on that one, but we participated.

Now we have the historical society to protect our treasured past and environment groups to help protect our water and air. We have theatres, concert halls, symphonies, both public and in our schools, other wonderful musical groups to delight us. We have Harbourfront with its theatre, ballet, gallery and the only place in the world where famous authors come to read from their books to audiences where an empty seat is hard to find. We have free swimming pools, wonderful parks, thousands of trees to shade us on our streets, nightclubs with country and jazz music, sports arenas. I could go on and on and on. Toronto is a remarkable city with a concern for others, and the people of this city deserve all the credit.

Now we are faced with the most secretive and difficult assault on our city by the Ontario government. It's declared that our city of Toronto shall amalgamate with the cities of East York, North York, York, Etobicoke and Scarborough. We're told that a board of trustees will be

nominated by the Lieutenant Governor and that it will work with, but dominate, the elected representatives until 1998. The decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court. The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to the transition team.

Why is Toronto treated this way by the provincial government? I think the government wants to control the activities and the money our city generates. Otherwise, why would our elected representatives be unable to make any decisions without the approval of the appointed board of trustees? We will have no say as to whether amalgamation should take place. When one asks why, there's never a straight answer. No one in government can come back on this decision to amalgamate with any figures that can be studied.

Is it money that's the reason for such plans to change what we treasure? In the past six years we have experienced a difficult time. We're told by the federal and provincial governments that we must pay off the deficit. There is 10% unemployment in the country; higher in Quebec and among native people and students. The federal and provincial governments tackle this grave problem by laying off thousands of people from government jobs, closing hospitals, laying off nurses in hospitals and homes for the aged, getting rid of teachers and social workers. Benefits are cut for the unemployed and the poor.

Industries, while making enormous profits, are promoting and acting on the theory that they must get leaner and meaner in order to compete in the global market. They downsize their staff, using technology to answer our telephone queries. Although it gives the customer very poor service as he or she pushes buttons, it's still cheaper.

There's no money to maintain OHIP as we know it, and transit in Toronto has increased senior fares by 75 cents return. They've increased the student fares by 60 cents. The mechanical condition of streetcars and buses is ignored, as the Honourable Al Leach well knows. No money.

Whenever one of us, concerned citizens, complains about the deep cuts to health care, education, welfare, unemployment insurance and social programs, we get a scolding from the corporate and political downsizers: "You are living in the past. The time has gone when governments could afford to keep funding such a strong and generous welfare state. The money isn't there any more." To quote Ed Finn, a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, "That answer is tommyrot."

Let's look at the deficit. In 1954 corporate taxes made up 24% of Revenue Canada income; individual taxes made up 35%. In 1994 corporate Canada produced 6%; individuals 60%. The federal government is responsible for collecting taxes in Canada. Why does this branch of the federal government allow \$40 billion in taxes to be interest-free, to remain with the companies that owe it as an interest-free loan and allow these companies to add the money outstanding each year to the interest-free loan?

Corporations and Taxation in Canada lists all the corporate companies with pre-tax profit, income tax paid and income tax rate; also outstanding taxes. It's an eye-

opener. Let me just quote from one of the 13 pages of corporations allowing \$5 million or more of outstanding taxes. In 1994 BCE, which is Bell Canada's parent company, owed \$2.25 billion. In 1995 it owed \$2.377 billion. This is government policy here. In the US it's used as a splendid reason to say: "There is no money for our social services. We must cut, cut, cut and fire, fire, fire."

1110

No wonder people are questioning the enormous profits when so many in Canada are having a terrible time. One in four children live in poverty. Maybe they will start to wonder if there really is a money shortage. Why is this subject of the deficit never looked into by newspapers, television or radio programs?

There will be higher taxes for small businesses and individuals if the amalgamation goes ahead and the megacity is realized. Mr Mundell, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says the province of Ontario will set the rules and we will have no control over our own budgets or know how property taxes are spent. Mr Mundell concluded that, "AMO's initial calculations indicate that, rather than the promised shifting of equal dollar responsibilities, municipalities" — in Ontario — "may lose up to \$700 million a year." This article was written by Gay Abbate and it was in the *Globe and Mail* on January 18, 1997.

How will we pay our share of the money without a tax raise? This is a yearly figure. The megacity proposal will cost money and will neglect our cities because the provincial government is far away from our needs and interests, and today is far away from understanding how a large, beautiful, successful city got that way. Don't destroy it.

Mr Gilchrist: Just very quickly, Ms Ryerson, I draw your attention to the fact that there have been 60 different reports done just since 1992 on various aspects of service delivery within Metro Toronto. Some dealt with all services; others were individual. For example, there was an Ernst and Young report on the possible amalgamation of fire services. It alone showed \$35 million in savings. The heads of the various parks departments met just last week and between them agreed they would save \$20 million without reducing any services.

I guess my question to you is, given the evolution of Toronto — not just Metro Toronto in the last 44 years but all of Toronto — which started out as a very small settlement right on the lakefront to something far bigger today, what is there implicit in just the change of artificial political boundaries that would in any way compromise the quality of life in this city? What possible difference does it make?

The people in Forest Hill, who all consider themselves Toronto residents today, were very opposed 30 years ago to being amalgamated. Today, Forest Hill is still considered Forest Hill. It's still a community and those people are proud to call themselves Torontonians in the greater sense. What is so fundamentally important about artificial political boundaries in the sense of what makes a community?

Mrs Ryerson: I think Toronto is an especially remarkable city. I think you would agree with that. There are not very many places like it in the world. I think it must

be partly from the fact that the people who live in this city are prepared to give extra, to work harder, to live in a more expensive place because they have such a beautiful place to live in. I'm sure that's true. We have water, we have an island close by and so on. All these things matter very much, and I think it's that that makes people feel happy.

If you are always told what you can do and what you can't do, and if the law is laid down in such a way that says, "It will be this way whether you like it or not," I don't think that's a way of getting along with people. I think there has always been a give and take. That sounds as if it's going to be gone.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs Julia Munro): Thank you very much, Ms Ryerson. We appreciate your comments this morning.

WILLIAM ARCHER

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call on William Archer. Good morning and welcome to the committee.

Mr William Archer: I have copies of my text available for the media.

I appreciate this limited opportunity to address the committee. As the time is short, I am providing your members with some background material. The clerk might distribute it because I can't cover everything in 10 minutes and you may find it of interest. I regret that I have only one copy of the New York handbook which deals with community boards. That could be filed with the clerk, and they might obtain others.

To identify my political affiliation, I simply say, "Shake the hand that shook the hand of G. Howard Ferguson." That's a couple of weeks ago.

There is a need for modifications in our structure of local government, but there is not a need for major surgery. Changes require time. In my study of Niagara, I found that four years of study, review and consultation took place before the region was established, and as a result, it has worked quite well. I appreciate that someone may have only been 10 or 12 when I did the study, but if he goes to Brock University and gets the study by Rod Church, he will find the details that occurred in Niagara.

Bill 103 ignores the principles of effective representation, access and informed discussion at the area and local levels. Mr Gilchrist was talking about artificial boundaries. All municipal boundaries are artificial and are established, so you're always going to have a break somewhere and you have to have some lines. But there's a difference between area levels and local levels. Actually, the real need today is for a coordinating structure for the GTA involving transportation, water and sewage services, development and planning. This legislation does nothing for the GTA and does serious damage to the structure of government in Metro Toronto. The costs are mythical. It's a beautiful Greek word, but it does describe: they're mythical; they're in the clouds.

If your problem is semantic and you want the word "Toronto" to be used for the Metro area, the answer is simple. It was suggested in 1969. Call the whole area the city of Toronto and call the local governments boroughs. This word is used both in New York and London and has some stature to it.

One wonders if the purpose of this legislation is to get rid of some political representatives who have views and ideas that some people don't like. If you want to change elected representatives, you do it at the election. You should not wipe out the structure of a government which in many ways works very well. Some improvements may be needed; there always are. Probably here at Queen's Park you've got committees doing reviews of various things.

Your attention is directed to the article from the Toronto Star of September 24, 1995, "The Shame of London" — it's in the additional material — showing what Margaret Thatcher did when she wiped out the greater London council. The Labour Party, which is likely to be elected, has committed itself to restoring the greater London council.

This legislation is full of errors, both major and minor. Read the Metro report of January 28. You even leave out the riding of Greenwood, where the famous slogan, "Not a partisan cry, but a national need," was first used. John Diefenbaker used it two or three times and credit was given to various people, but it came from Greenwood, and you leave Greenwood out.

Good legislation requires full consideration and a timely consideration of its nature and effect. Decisions do take time, consultation and knowledge, especially when they have far-reaching consequences. Metro Toronto did not come into effect overnight. It was the result of much discussion and several reports, and over time there have been modifications.

1120

Metro may not be as well known as it should be, but a major cause of that has been the inadequate coverage by a media far more interested in Sunshine Girls and big ads for all the furniture dealers, "Don't pay until 2520" or something, and inadequate coverage can be said about all governments. The Toronto Star could not find space to print the boundaries of the new federal ridings, ridings which are to be the basis of the provincial ridings and proposed for Toronto in this legislation. The Toronto Star couldn't find space to print them.

This legislation contains serious gaps. It mentions neighbourhood committees and community councils but provides no detail. The handbook from New York has 158 pages and is only one of several documents I would draw to the attention of my colleagues in the Conservative Party; perhaps I might even reach the minister. He'll find an exchange of correspondence with him that he finally answered when the president of the local association said he should.

In 1989, the voters of New York City ratified new charter provisions changing how city governments deal with the budget. What might be good for New York might be good for Metro. The legislation flies in the face of worldwide use of two-level local government, whether it's Tokyo or Belgrade. The Serbs are fighting for the results of 14 district elections, not for one big city. It's a system that was introduced by Robert Baldwin in 1849 and used in every county and every regional area. There's talk about the Olympics. The next Olympics will be held in Sydney, Australia, which has many local governments.

If the proposal for a single city is valid, it should be able to stand up to a thorough review. If it is not, which is the view of many people, it should not be adopted.

All this is happening at a time when the government is doing a big downloading of the costs of social services, which should be financed by income taxes and not by taxes on property, a sound Conservative principle.

It is well to remember the Depression of the Dirty Thirties, when many municipalities had to be rescued. This led to the adoption of the 50-30-20 sharing by the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Unfortunately, and I look to this side, the federal government has changed its policies. Now the province proposes to do likewise.

As for duplication — it's a great word — this depends on the actual operation. "Planning" is a generic word. The actual function differs from location to location and the responsibility of the planner. Is it area-wide? Is it for a local purpose? If I go to Niagara, is it for something that affects the whole area, because you finally got rid of your telephone system where you couldn't call from Niagara to Welland to St Catharines without paying a toll charge? Is it for a local purpose, a boulevard café? Is it for financing? Is it for family use? Is it for education? Is it for the environment? "Planning": the word may be the same, but the functions differ.

Let us avoid the extremes, both left and right, and rise above the pettiness of small-minded critics. Time should be provided for this proposal to be fully examined, with full details of how it would operate by the people who are going to have to live with it. Remember, decisions are easy. It is the consequences which may be difficult and even disastrous.

When I look to the board of trade, Mr Gilchrist, I think of the president of the board of trade, who's part of the Rogers Group, and I think he should go back and tell my friend Ted Rogers, "Amalgamation is so good that we're going to put video, cable, radio and Cantel all together into one set of administration," because he knows —

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Archer. We've exceeded your allotted time. I want to thank you for coming forward today and making your presentation to the committee.

Mr Archer: Did all the members get a copy of this?

The Chair: Yes, we did.

ANNE REDPATH

The Chair: May I please have Anne Redpath come forward. Welcome, Ms Redpath, to the committee this morning.

Ms Anne Redpath: My name is Anne Redpath, and I object to the merging of the cities and borough that presently make up Metropolitan Toronto. I believe such an action is poorly thought out and smells of decision-making done with 30 seconds' rattled thought. But I object even more to the power Bill 103 gives to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to kill the democratic process in Metropolitan Toronto.

I believe the democratic process has four components: electing citizens from among ourselves to make decisions about our actions and our lives; providing an input into

the decision-making process of the elected officials; providing access to the courts to ensure the actions of the decision-makers, ie, the government, are legal and constitutional; and holding elected officials accountable for their actions. These components or actions are the due process of being governed in a democracy.

How does Bill 103 affect democracy in Toronto and the process of my being governed as a resident of the city? Bill 103 replaces the elected officials of the city of Toronto with politically appointed trustees. The trustees are responsible and accountable to the Ontario government. The persons whom I and my fellow residents elected to our municipal governments are, as they say in the vernacular, toast. Indeed, their position is untenable. Legally, they are accountable and responsible to the residents of their municipalities until the next election. But illegally now, and legally if Bill 103 is passed, they have no authority to make any decisions that deal with revenues, expenditures, budgets, the hiring of personnel or the separating of personnel. Due democratic process has been breached, shattered like a china teacup hurled against a concrete wall.

The trustees meet in secret and do not report on their meetings to the public. Thus it is not possible to have any input into their decision-making process. It is not even possible to know what decisions they have made. The public — that's me and other ordinary people like me — pay the salaries of these trustees. For that, we are entitled to no consideration, not even to know how much we are paying them.

Worse still is to be found in the bill. The public are not entitled to have any contact with the trustees or any input into the decision-making of the trustees, yet these same trustees are given the power to create and install a transition committee to oversee the proposed amalgamation. This team is paid for by us, but it reports to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

1130

Looking at my copy of the bill last night, I found that when I read it last December I had written "Christ," followed by three exclamation points, next to subsection 18(1). That is the subsection that says, "The decisions of the transition team are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." Another element of democratically due process bites the dust. The trustees are above the law.

Bill 103 provides that a transition team be appointed to oversee the proposed amalgamation. The transition team is appointed until dissolved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs at some date on or subsequent to January 31, 1998. There is no assurance that the team will ever go. The team are political appointees of the government. They report to the minister. They are not accountable to us; we only pay their way and the way of those they appoint to assist them.

Bill 103 requires the transition team to bring into being the administration for the megacity. Think about the implications of such an action. The government makes political appointments of trustees, who in turn make political appointments of the transition committee, who in turn make political appointments of all the other positions in the administration, and the bill says that no person

appointed can be changed by subsequent municipal governments, another abrogation of our democratic process.

The government of Ontario appoints all, absolutely all, of the civil servants of this new megalopolis, and appoints them for life. We have no input into the personnel decisions, no way to hold those appointing accountable, because they are not elected. The bill prohibits the courts from scrutinizing the actions of the transition team or the trustees. All are exempt from being held personally liable for their actions. Oh, what a wonderful world in which to be a political appointee. Oh, what a wonderful world for the Tory government. They will have created an administration for the new megalopolis with a structure and personnel to reflect their image. The bill will prohibit our ever changing it.

Bill 103 tramples yet again on the due process of democracy when it gives the following powers to the transition team, the transition team that may have been appointed forever. The bill gives the transition team the ability to recommend to the minister "the amounts the new city may raise and the amounts the new city and its local boards may spend in any year." That is not the language that would be used if the transition team were not expected to be in power for a long, long time. I found I had written "Shit" beside this section in the bill when I first read it last December.

Bill 103 is a powerful instrument which carries with it the ability to easily crush and destroy the democratic process as we have known it on the municipal level in the Toronto area.

The Premier has indicated that he believes that because he was duly elected to his office he therefore has the right to do as he wishes with the 2.2 million persons in the Metropolitan Toronto area. The power he is using to destroy us is not unlike the power that gets used when a man takes a woman to dinner, subsequently rapes her but calls it consensual sex because she gave her consent by accepting his dinner invitation. Because we voted Tory in the last election, we are presumed to have given our consent to have the democratic process of our city pillaged by those we elected provincially. We did not.

As I wrote this submission to the committee, I found myself asking why Premier Harris and Minister Leach would want to disfranchise me. Why would they want to use their power to squash me like a beetle under the foot of a jackbooted thug? What have I done to deserve this treatment?

But the issue is bigger than a personal one. The issue is, what has Toronto done or what do Toronto and North York and Etobicoke and Scarborough and York and East York have the potential to do that requires this naked use of power and the obscene abuse of the democratic process by the government of Ontario under Mr Harris? Bill 103 deserves to die.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): An excellent presentation. Could you give me your comment on a statement made by Mr Gilchrist that amalgamation has nothing to do with the downloading of the responsibility now being given to the municipality? What are your views on that?

Ms Redpath: My view is that amalgamation is probably necessary, because if they were to download

without it, two of the municipalities could be forced into bankruptcy by the downloading, unless they have merged it and the costs are shared.

Mr Curling: You feel that it's a further cost to the municipality, that the province is neglecting its responsibility as a province and passing it on to the municipality? Is that your view?

Ms Redpath: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Curling, and thank you for coming forward —

Mr Sergio: Do we have more time?

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds if you want to add something, Mr Sergio.

Mr Sergio: If I can squeeze it in very quickly. Mr Leach did say it's time to move on, because they've had too many studies; therefore, he has to move on. Then they engaged Mr Crombie to do a final study of disentanglement and his recommendations were totally neglected. They did not do what Mr Crombie had recommended. What do you think of that?

Ms Redpath: If you were to say to me it's time to move on, and I'm on an ice floe out in the middle of the lake, how I move on is of critical importance, and I think it's how we move on here that's important.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Redpath, for coming forward.

PETER SHEPHERD

The Chair: Would Peter Shepherd please come forward. Good morning, Mr Shepherd. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Peter Shepherd: Good morning. I'm not representing any particular group, but I'm with the Citizens for Local Democracy and I'm also with the Carpenters Local 27.

I guess my main concern is work for people in my union and for what we've been trained in. I felt I had been trained in thermal retrofit, so I am very interested in whether we're able to work in something that should be socially beneficial and should reduce the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in my union was about 50% for four years, from 1991 to 1995. I see this bill as the direct antithesis of being able to operationalize energy efficiency programs.

I live in a rooming house which is a thermal slum. I have no leverage with which to change that. My walls are very cold, and there are many other concerns in terms of energy and security. What I'm seeing coming from the environmentalists is that we could be facing an ecosystem crash within several decades and that there's no consideration given to distribution of positional goods. For instance, if you could generate 10 times more jobs from energy efficiency programs, from putting to carpenters to work retrofitting buildings, then you would actually cut the unemployment rate a great deal.

But this kind of legislation and removing, as the provincial government has just done, the requirement to insulate basements, is in direct opposition or is not trying to fight the trend towards eco-catastrophe. You don't have to look very far into hydrology and radiation balance to see that this is all supported by mainstream

science, and this government is not doing anything to deal with this in a systematic way.

I guess to have a little more focus, I'll read from what Brian Milani wrote describing how the changes of this Bill 103 will impact on the economic system for my community, which is Carpenters:

"The megacity is not just bad for environmental protection, but it sabotages advanced forms of production and development.

"Environmentalists have long championed local control as the surest means of protecting the natural environment. People generally know and value their communities best. Local organization, local participation and local representation in government has been the best guarantee of environmental health and quality. Current provincial government moves to undercut local governance through its megacity plans have been unanimously condemned by the environmental movement. But the crippling of environmental protection is only one ecological dimension of the megacity project. Green economic development is the primary hope for a truly efficient, job-creating and high-quality economic development in urban areas today. The giant centralized bureaucracy proposed by the Tories represents a choice for development based on waste, paper (not material) wealth, labour displacement and growing inequality.

"Scale, efficiency and participation

"The relationship of efficiency and democracy to scale is always important. But in an ecological economy, the connection between grass-roots democracy and economic efficiency is especially crucial. This is because ecological efficiency depends so much on flexibility and participation. Green economic development works by doing 'the most with the least' — the fewest materials and the least energy — by moving with natural processes and making the most of local capacities."

1140

Related to this, I'd just like to point out that the company that I worked with that built the healthy house — you'll hear from the National Energy Conservation Association, which is a trade-based organization, there is not a level playing field in terms of the energy policy in the country. When you give billions of dollars to oil, auto and nuclear industries, it's impossible for those companies to get off the ground, and they basically kill themselves because they're not on a level playing field. It stunts the entire industry so that all we're left with is being able to export very dangerous technologies such as nuclear to China and underwriting those at great cost and risk, which is an enormous security risk and does nothing in terms of the distribution of positional goods, that is, jobs that pay a living wage to those who are perfectly willing to work and who are trained in these programs.

"In a green economy, the landscape, urban design and spatial organization of all sorts have a particularly important role to play in doing 'more with less.' In green development, the landscape itself can be skilfully cultivated to do the work ordinarily requiring massive mega-projects and great materials and energy throughput."

By this, we can go back to hydrology. When you look at, say, ecological footprint studies, if you haven't studied environmental engineering, the numbers seem to come

out of nowhere, but what I'm seeing is that it is very possible to have a complete ecosystem crash within several decades, because all you have to do is remove one critical factor from the equation. You change one critical factor, and that's enough to crash the whole system, which is what we're actually doing.

"Eco-infrastructure' can provide for many community needs for pure water, food, energy, clean air, climate control, and even industrial feedstocks. Even the siting of industrial processes can facilitate the elimination of waste by having complementary enterprises use each other's byproducts and waste heat."

At this point, we could point out that you could heat all of Scarborough from the waste heat from I think it was either Darlington or Pickering, one of the two, so in terms of having massive projects that don't distribute work, it's just extremely inefficient, even from a conservative point of view. We all express our conservatism in different ways, but in mainstream science, there's a powerful cultural bias in the scientific community towards saying that large-scale projects that work with nuclear physics, which is a very exciting, glamorous area, are more efficient than actually having energy retrofit, which doesn't on the surface appear to be very interesting. But this is a way in which we can democratize science and put many people to work, and the training is already there.

There have been 100 people trained in my union, and of all those 100 people who have been trained in the last four years in energy retrofit, only 18 of them got a contract for six months, so this is many man-hours that could have been done operationalizing a system that would show that green economics is really the way to promote an industrial renaissance in employment. I'll just go back to reading the text here.

"Absolutely key to this kind of intelligent design are questions of scale, that is, appropriate scale. Small is not always beautiful, but large is most often quite inefficient and inflexible. 'Closing the loops of production and consumption' usually means fitting into very specific local circumstances, and being tuned into very specific local needs. It means serving local consumption and regional markets much more, rather than exports. And the design and management of such processes are too complex to be done from above in a hierarchical fashion.

"Making the best use of every place means that green economic development requires much greater participation than conventional industrial development, which is capital-intensive and export-driven. Making the most of the diversity and idiosyncracies of every community and place means a much greater 'eyes to acres' ratio. This is true when considering major energy-retrofit programs, urban permaculture, solar aquatic water treatment, recycling and remanufacturing systems.

"Eco-development is people-intensive. It relies less on large amounts of capital, energy or materials, and more on human skills and creativity. These projects and enterprises create prosperity, not just as a spinoff of capital accumulation, but directly, by increasing a community's quality of life. This direct production of green development for community and environmental need, coupled with the people-intensive nature of green development,

means that human development occupies centre stage. Community is at the core of real green economic development, and a key to local development is intimate knowledge of local needs."

The Chair: Mr Shepherd, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up. You're coming to the end of your allotted time.

Mr Shepherd: Okay. I'll just stop there. If anybody has any questions —

The Chair: You've actually gone beyond your allotted time, so if you want to have a final word on your presentation, you can.

Mr Shepherd: No, that's fine.

The Chair: I want to thank you very much, on behalf of the committee, for coming forward today to make your presentation.

GARY SHAUL

The Chair: Will Gary Shaul please come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Gary Shaul: Thank you. Just for the record, the name on the list is spelled incorrectly. Thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments this morning. My name is Gary Shaul. I was born in Toronto and spent a big part of my life in North York. I currently reside in Toronto and I also work in Toronto, next door at the Ministry of Education and Training in the Mowat Block, where I'm also the local OPSEU president, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. I would like to focus briefly on three areas: representation, privatization and equity.

First, on representation: Reducing the number of elected representatives from 134 to 44, as I understand, is a cut of about 67%, and this will cause the average ward to have about 50,000 residents. In contrast, it's my understanding that the average ward in North Bay has about 5,300 residents. I ask, how will councillors ever find the time to meet with all the constituents who have problems? How often will councillors get a chance to speak at council meetings of 44 councillors? I believe the wards are too big and the council is too big.

With wards this size, it's going to take considerable resources to even think about running for political office. I believe this will narrow the pool of candidates to those who can either afford to bankroll themselves or find corporate sponsors to back them. I believe this will severely impact the diversity of our elected councils and result in a council dominated by business-oriented candidates. The few grass-roots candidates who may succeed in getting into office will be grossly outnumbered on the council.

This leads to my second point, on privatization. The trend towards privatizing public services is growing. We're seeing it at all levels of government. By creating one huge city, it's going to make it easier to sell off public services and assets. Contracts are going to be larger, and only the largest corporations are going to benefit from this. Who will people complain to when they're not receiving the services they are paying for?

Public services should be delivered by the public sector, not by the for-profit private sector which cares

little about the communities in which they operate and cares most about their bottom lines.

1150

My last point is on equity. First, what is going to happen to all the equity-related programs currently being delivered by the different cities? These are programs which have been designed and tailored over a period of years for a variety of different communities and circumstances. These are programs which have a direct impact on the quality of life for residents and working conditions for civic employees.

What we will see, I believe, is at best the lowest-common-denominator approach to dealing with fairness in the delivery of programs and in working conditions. With the downloading of services on municipalities — and I know this is probably the topic for another set of hearings — we will see the new city of Toronto unable to afford any funds for equity programs. We have already seen this at the provincial level, where the Employment Equity Act was repealed, plans to address systemic discrimination that were already under way were scrapped and, despite promises, nothing has been put in place to deal with systemic discrimination in the workplace.

Another aspect of the equity issue goes back to my first point about representation. People of colour and others who are already not well represented in any of the seven governments will become even more marginalized if corporate candidates dominate the new council.

In conclusion, the creation of a single city of Toronto is shortsighted and not well-planned-out. There are more questions now than there are answers. A more reasonable approach to dealing with municipal reform in Toronto would be to set up an inclusive consultation process with enough time to allow citizens to participate fully with access to all the facts and information. Thank you.

The Chair: We have about five minutes for questions.

Mr Silipo: Thank you very much, Mr Shaul, and also for allowing a bit of time for us to exchange some thoughts. I want to start with your last point on the consultation process that you're advocating happen. Certainly we have been calling upon the government to ensure that here, just like they're able to accept the consultation and discussion process in the surrounding area, the 905 area, in Hamilton and Ottawa and many other areas where different ways of restructuring municipal governance have been looked at, where there has been or will be some process in place — Metropolitan Toronto seems to be the only place where they're saying: "No, we know what's best; we don't need a process," even though David Crombie, the last person they asked to look at this, said that's exactly what was needed. What they want to do instead is to simply roll on with their decision.

Of course, one thing that has resulted in is the referendum being held later, starting this month and into March. It seems to me that those at least give the government the possibility to say that if the people of Metropolitan Toronto reject their megacity scheme, they will at least take some time to reflect upon that and pause in this. Could you comment about your sense of the role that the referenda are going to play in this process we're into now?

Mr Shaul: Minimally, the referenda are allowing for discussion to happen, debates at all levels. I was in an Italian restaurant the other night; I don't understand Italian, but I heard the word "megacity" going. Everywhere I go — I was talking to my mother, who I wouldn't call political in any way, and she's talking about the issues. I think that's at least one positive thing: People are starting to talk about it.

For something that took as long to build as Metro Toronto, we need to make sure there's enough time to make sure all these issues are dealt with. I believe the results of the referenda should be respected. Whether that's the end of the road and it's just the status quo — I don't know if I'm advocating that either, but I think the government should heed what people have to say at the community level.

Mr Silipo: I'm certainly not hearing many people advocate the status quo. Others have said, and I certainly would agree, that there is a will to look at what changes should be made, but it should be done with some kind of sensible process of discussion that involves local politicians and, most important, involves citizens who are going to be affected by these changes.

At the many meetings I've been attending on this, as you and others have, people are beginning to understand very clearly that this is all about downloading costs, increasing property taxes and losing services that we have today and that perhaps we've been taking for granted to some extent.

Ms Churley: Thank you for your presentation. Personally, I very much appreciate your point about the difficulty there will be for local grass-roots people to run in a municipal election. I say "personally" because when I ran in 1988, my short-lived career at city hall — you may recall back in 1988 there was quite an uprising against the pro-development council which existed at the time. Remember Bay-Adelaide and the curtain of high-rises built without public consultation and proper planning down by the waterfront? There was an uprising against that and against bad environmental planning in my ward, and other issues, and I was able to go out there, with very little money, as a grass-roots community candidate and over a nine-month period knock on practically every door, get to know people, have them know who I am and my involvement in the community.

I very much fear, as you do, that with these huge boundaries, that isn't going to happen, that the kind of innovation that local grass-roots candidates who know their communities can bring will just disappear. I believe that's what you're saying, that the innovative programs that came out of city council here in Toronto, for instance, that come from local grass-roots candidates, just won't be there any more.

Mr Shaul: There's a saying which probably applies: Think locally and act globally. To the extent that communities are able to participate in decision-making around what happens in their neighbourhoods, in their communities, you're going to get programs and policies that reflect what people need. The bigger those ridings, the more distant the representatives are going to be and the harder for representatives to take the pulse of the community as well as to actually make things happen in their community.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Shaul, for coming forward to make your presentation today.

DAN LECKIE

The Chair: Would Dan Leckie please come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Dan Leckie: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members. My name is Dan Leckie, and I guess what I'm here to do is to appeal to you for my job. I am a city councillor for ward 5, downtown Toronto. That includes Queen's Park, so in some sense we're your host, but it also includes a number of very vibrant and healthy downtown neighbourhoods: Chinatown, Kensington, Sussex-Ulster, the waterfront, Bathurst Quay.

These are neighbourhoods I love. I also say that I love my job. But I also want to point out to you that if you think of them in terms of the neighbourhoods you personally live in, you know that neighbourhoods are very fragile places; they're very vulnerable to change. If all of a sudden Elliot Lake gets hit with a huge Denison Mines layoff, property values fall through the floor, people are unemployed and every community support starts to be challenged: the hospital, the women's auxiliary, the welfare situation. A neighbourhood like that is very vulnerable.

I want to point out to you that downtown neighbourhoods are equally vulnerable. They're in very fragile circumstances. They're in a large metropolis area which has not only millions of tourists — downtown Toronto has about two million tourists in it almost every month — but more significantly than that, these neighbourhoods can be affected by planning decisions or by environmental factors or by safety issues that other neighbourhoods usually have more control over.

One of the things I urge you to think about is, how can downtown neighbourhoods have the, mainly, planning power they need to protect themselves? I sometimes use the example that one of the most vibrant neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto is the Sussex-Ulster-Annex area. Everybody knows about it. However, at one time it was going to be the offramp for the meeting of the midtown and Spadina expressways. If those had been built, that neighbourhood wouldn't have existed at all.

Today, I've got to point out to you, most of my job is spent working with those neighbourhoods, with the city planning department and public works department in solving local problems to keep those neighbourhoods from feeling abandoned, to solve their traffic and parking problems, to deal with environmental issues, to make sure they have adequate parks. It's those kinds of things that are so important.

1200

If you take an area and let it deteriorate, which I propose to you would happen under Bill 103, then abandoned buildings in those areas become subject to vandalism and they decrease property values and a feeling of safety in that area. Then what you have is a mass exodus from those areas and a switch of use, usually to a worse condition.

Toronto has always prided itself in being, and is known internationally as, a city which has people on the

street 24 hours a day. There's a residential base, there's a working day base, there's a tourist base, there are events, bars, nightclubs and cafés, but that's only possible because you have those residential core neighbourhoods there to anchor the whole process. Part of the reason Toronto is safe and healthy, why people can walk the streets at night, is because it's someone's neighbourhood and they respect that and they look after it.

Just this morning I met with the police. We were doing local problem-solving about where some gang activities had developed. With my ability now to work with the street allowance control bylaw staff, neighbours and the police I can say: "Hey, if we move that vending stall and that grate, then that situation won't develop in that particular place. We can solve that problem for you, for the police and for the neighbourhood and it will be a more safe place." That is impossible under Bill 103.

You might ask why. It's simply that not only would my job, representing now maybe 30,000 people — I've got to point out to you that I also have all the downtown business square footage to contend with. My new ward would be 50,000 people, but I would have the problems of the whole of Metropolitan Toronto to deal with. I would spend all my time solving the problem of what I just spoke of by the simplistic solution, the formula solution of, "Gee, if there's a problem there, then we need more police." But everybody knows that doesn't work.

You solve community problems by flexible, local neighbourhood solutions. In a new council I would be so preoccupied with mega-project approaches and formula approaches to problem-solving that I would never have the time or the orientation to get down and work with a neighbourhood and try to figure out how it can be a safer place, a healthier place, a place that has some sense of power and control over the significant things that affect it.

I beg you to think about your own neighbourhood, to think about what it needs to be healthy and safe, to think about the fact that what you're doing here is changing the political power of our neighbourhoods. My downtown neighbourhoods will go from one vote in a council of 17, where all the other councillors represent similar kinds of neighbourhoods and understand each other, to a council where there will be one vote out of 45, where the predominant preoccupation and all your time will be absorbed in trying to capture in your mind how to solve the mega transportation, policing and utility questions for the area. Local community planning and safety issues will be completely lost. I just urge you to think that through.

In that regard I obviously continue to support a two-tier structure. I just want to point out quickly why. First of all the lower tiers don't cost you much. The total transfers to the city of Toronto from the province are only \$24 million out of a budget of \$500 million. Yet we're out there trying to solve problems that you are going to have to deal with in the future.

I'm a chair of the city cycling committee and I'm the president of the Toronto atmospheric fund. We're out there making Toronto the best cycling city in North America. We're trying to solve issues associated with air quality, asthma, cancer, water quality, swimmable

beaches. These are things that we systematically work at with local neighbourhoods and not with many resources from the province. These are the things that not only keep Toronto healthy and safe but they give the whole of the GTA a healthy core on which to base their economic development and their quality of life.

We aren't the cause of the problems you're trying to solve, and I say "we," the local municipality. A two-tier structure is meant at the senior level — the Metro government in this case — to provide for coordination and equity issues. The local level tries to deal with the planning and public health and community accountability issues. That can work very well. We're in the process of resolving a lot of our problems with Metro, and those can be done through convergence of departments and by good communication and coordination. I agree with you that to have efficient, effective growth, there needs to be more coordination, but on the broader regional basis. You still need to have the local accountability of a lower tier of government which has influence and power over planning and health issues.

I also want to point out to you that not only are we not the cause of the problem but we're in the midst, in downtown Toronto, of a major recovery. This is something that should appeal to those of you who are primarily concerned about cost and economic development rather than local neighbourhood safety. In my ward alone, on the waterfront we have \$3 billion worth of building permit applications or planning requests for rezoning or revitalization. In the rest of the ward, in the King-Spadina area we've taken an historical industrial area and rezoned it. I have 2,000 housing units being developed right now in the Wellington-John area. Those are major aspects of a recovery for downtown Toronto. We've also filled up a commercial space.

Even that economic recovery is very vulnerable. If you go through with Bill 103, you're going to create not only destabilization but in the investment community you're going to create a great doubt. I know they already have the doubt and have expressed it to you, on the board of trade side, on the downloading and tax side. But in terms of the development side of the community, they're going to have a great doubt about, "Is this a good place to invest?"

First of all, I'll have to deal with a government that doesn't know what it's doing for a couple of years as it tries to figure out what to do with all these applications. It's not easy to make those planning transitions. Second, they're not going to know about the actual stable area in terms of its ability to support the kinds of investments they want to make. I beg you to look at that issue as well, one I thought might appeal to you.

The Chair: Mr Leckie, sorry. You're beyond the 10 minutes already.

Mr Leckie: Okay. I had more points, but does that mean I've also lost the opportunity to answer any questions?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr Leckie: Okay. In terms of wrapping up I simply go back to my primary premise. I have a job now that I love to do. It's for neighbourhoods that I love and a city that I love. If you think about your own neighbourhoods,

you'd want them to have enough political power so that you could keep them healthy and safe. That's a very primary thing not only in municipal government but in all levels of government. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Leckie.

ANDREA SURICH

The Chair: Would Andrea Surich please come forward. Welcome, Andrea.

Mrs Andrea Surich: Good afternoon. Thank you for understanding the importance of having public committee hearings on this question. My name is Andrea Surich. I live and work in Toronto. I own a home in the east end of Toronto, and together with my husband, am raising my two daughters here.

I am opposed to the megacity bill, Bill 103. I've lived in many cities across Canada and have now chosen to live in Toronto. Though I have recently been offered opportunities to leave Toronto for work in other cities, I've chosen to remain here. This has not been a difficult choice. The vibrant cultural life, the opportunities afforded my children in the form of services, festivals, ethnic diversity and good, flexible education all helped me in forming this decision.

I like living in this city. I feel safe here. I know my family can have a fulfilling life here. I know my councillors will get back to me if I have problems and are creative in finding solutions.

1210

Now the government of Ontario wants to make sweeping changes in how the cities in Metropolitan Toronto will function. To implement this amalgamation, they want to appoint three trustees to oversee our elected officials, so three appointees will be able to overrule, along with their own appointed staff, any decisions that our own elected representatives make. I'd never heard of these trustees before, and I know I certainly didn't vote for them. Maybe this is legal in provincial terms, but it certainly sounds autocratic to me, dare I say anti-democratic.

I've grown up in a democratic society here in Canada and I've always taken it for granted. I hadn't realized what a fragile thing democracy is and how important it is that we nurture and watch over it. This apparent lack of democratic process has made me stop and think about what it has been like living under this government.

I have lived, indeed thrived under many Ontario governments. Seldom have they actually been voted in by me personally, but as a citizen of Ontario I have always felt I could trust them to represent and support me. I have always seen them as a benign presence interested in the good of the population. Now I feel otherwise.

I do not trust that this government is making decisions in a measured, thoughtful manner. I do not trust that they care about every member of this society. I do not trust anything they do or say any more. Why? Because this government has abused that trust. This government is a bully government. The definition of "bully" in the Oxford dictionary: "A person who uses strength of power to coerce others by fear, who persecutes or oppresses by force or threats"; in Webster's dictionary: "Rough, overbearing fellow who intimidates, overawes; ill-treats."

We all know what bullies are. We have all dealt with them in our lives. They intimidate only those who cannot defend themselves, such as women, children, seniors, the poor and the unemployed, they are afraid of those stronger and more intelligent than themselves, such as doctors and corporations, and they emulate those they perceive as most powerful, as having it all, such as Americans. Only they are worthy of the bullies' regard.

How else to explain their unwillingness to look to Ontarians for creative solutions? How else to explain this headlong rush to copy American cities in their misguided megacities and downloading of services to the municipalities? How else to explain the joy with which they describe the city of Chicago or New York? How else to explain putting plans forward that didn't work 10 years ago elsewhere? Why can this government not believe that the way we govern municipally is the envy of other communities? Why can this government not believe Fortune magazine when it describes Toronto as the best city in the world?

Is it so difficult to believe that a Canadian way of doing things is worthy of international praise? Is this government so set in its ways that it cannot imagine that a compassionate social democracy can produce something that works better?

You should see this as a challenge to show off our form of municipal governance to the world rather than destroying it. Self-confidence in our own ways is the first step to a strong society. Bashing us continually with the information that everything is broken is demoralizing and non-constructive. In fact it is bullying.

Yes, I imagine there are inefficiencies in some areas of our municipal bureaucracy. Won't there always be? I believe many of these are being addressed as we speak. Yes, there probably are politicians who have their own agenda and won't listen to the local citizens. Won't there be if it's all bigger, and won't it be even harder to catch them at it? Amalgamate things that make sense as it's already happening, but don't take away our local representation. Don't expect councillors to represent twice as many people on local issues and expect them to function well. That's a recipe for failure.

The ability of local councillors to understand the diversity of their own wards is probably stretched to the limit as it is. As services are downloaded on the municipalities they will be even more stretched, and the bullied will have even fewer resources to protect themselves.

Where do the bullied go for help in defending themselves? To each other? Too much of their energy goes to mere survival. To their local representatives? Not if those representatives don't exist any more. Where do they go? They could look to that group of people who have a little bit more time to think about the consequences of the edicts coming down from Queen's Park — the group that has a social conscience and still feels responsible for the wellbeing of a society as a whole, the compassionate group that is being squeezed out of existence: the middle class.

This class knows that if the city goes the way of American cities, it will no longer be pleasant to live downtown. It knows that inner-city schools will have even fewer resources and that services will be cut. It is

not so naïve as to think that property taxes will not be raised to save what is important. The spectre of empty office buildings and a dying downtown core are frightening ones. This group knows that it either voices its concerns or leaves the city. The bullied do not have that choice.

So why are we still here? Because we know in our hearts that bullying is unfair and cannot be tolerated. Being bigger does not give the right to bully, and the same goes for a government. Just because a government gets a majority through the first-through-the-gate principle, that does not give it the right to bully either. It must take the responsibility of representing the whole of society seriously. It must consider all points of view when making decisions, particularly when it is making fundamental change decisions.

Democracy is a participatory system, and all our views must be considered. I am here to join in that democratic discussion. If democracy gets in the way of making fast decisions, so be it. The outcomes will be stronger for the discussion if the process is respected. Having a referendum in each affected municipality is a celebration of the democratic process, and the outcomes need to be taken seriously by this government. Any suggestion that they be ignored by the government will show arrogance and the bully mentality.

Please see the referendum results as binding and show that you understand the responsibility you hold in your position of power. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We have two minutes for questions from the government caucus.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mrs Surich, for coming before us here this morning. We find it somewhat frustrating and we appreciate that in partisan politics, positions held today may not be the positions held tomorrow. One of the Liberal members sitting before us as part of this committee today, when he ran for municipal office, called for the amalgamation of the cities.

We also have the Liberal Party at the referendum hearings going on right now, at least their representative, Ms Papatello, stating that it is the Liberal Party position that referendums are flawed, that they are an inappropriate way, that they are an abrogation of the rights and responsibilities of MPPs. That is what they are saying in the other committee hearings, and Mr Christopherson from the NDP agreed with that. Those comments are all on the record —

Mr Sergio: That was taken out of context.

Mr Gilchrist: — saying it was totally inappropriate to deal with municipal issues through referenda.

Mr Sergio: That was taken out of context.

Ms Churley: That's not true.

Mr Gilchrist: I guess our frustration here is that we have afforded 600 people the opportunity to come forward here and we have said that —

Interjections.

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr Gilchrist: — we want to have people make specific suggestions. You mentioned as part of your address that there may be inefficiencies in how municipal governments are run. That's exactly what this bill hopes to address.

Ms Churley: Nonsense.

Mr Gilchrist: If you don't like this bill, what would you suggest is the appropriate way to deal with the duplication and the overlap in services and to deal with the fact that, for example, the city of Toronto has two and a half times as many employees per capita as the city of Scarborough, yet they each plow streets and they each mow park lawns? How would you see us dealing with that duplication and that tremendous imbalance in what it costs the taxpayers of the very cities?

Mrs Surich: I'm not equipped to make a decision on that because I don't have all those facts before me. As a citizen it is important to me to know there is a democracy going on, and that is not my perception of what is going on here.

Mr Gilchrist: If I told you there are 60 different reports that put the facts at our disposal —

Ms Churley: Speaking of bullies.

Mr Gilchrist: — on every single aspect of municipal services —

Mrs Surich: Are you bullying me, sir?

Mr Gilchrist: I'm asking you another question.

Mr Colle: Don't bully the witness.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm asking a question —

Interjections.

The Chair: Order.

Mr Gilchrist: — the way you did to Alan Tonks yesterday.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist, order, please.

Mr Gilchrist: They've taken my time.

Mr Sergio: He's misinforming the public.

Ms Churley: You're making their case right there.

The Chair: Order.

Mr Gilchrist: If I told you there were 60 different reports —

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Chair, can we get some order here?

The Chair: Order, please.

Interjections.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist, Mr Sergio, Ms Churley. I would appreciate it if members of the audience and members of the committee would respect everyone's right to have an opportunity to speak. Mr Gilchrist has that opportunity just as members opposite at certain times have time to make statements.

Mr Colle: Don't let him bully the witness.

Mr Sergio: Tell him what Crombie said.

The Chair: All that being said, Mr Gilchrist, we've exceeded the 10 minutes allotted to Ms Surich.

Mr Gilchrist: Hijacked by the opposition.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward today and making a presentation. This committee is recessed until 3:30.

The committee recessed from 1219 to 1533.

The Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to our afternoon session. I think most folks in the audience this afternoon are actually different from the ones who were here this morning. I want to just remind folks that the rules of the chamber apply here in the committee.

As an impartial Chair, I am bound to uphold order, and the rules in the chamber are that there's not to be any

audience outburst, whether it be clapping or any kind of shouting or so on and so forth, whether you're in favour or opposed to the presenter, whether you're in favour or opposed to the member speaking. I would ask, please, for your cooperation. I know in some cases you want to voice your feelings, but it's not appropriate to do that, and it's up to me to make sure there is order in the committee hearings. I ask for your cooperation.

Likewise to the members on both sides: I've served on committees with many of you and you're very cooperative. Members deserve and have the privilege in the Legislature to speak and to question uninterrupted. You all know that and so I hope you will also cooperate this afternoon.

BARBARA CZARNECKI

The Chair: The first person to speak to us this afternoon is Barbara Czarnecki. Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes this afternoon to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit. If there's some time left at the end of your presentation, the question time will be allotted to Mr Colle or Mr Sergio of the Liberal Party.

Ms Barbara Czarnecki: May I ask, if there is time left over when I've made my presentation, would it be in order for me to ask a question and ask for an answer, or does it not work that way?

The Chair: You can ask a question. Whether or not it gets answered is a different story.

Ms Czarnecki: Could I direct my question to anyone or must it be Mr Colle or Mr Sergio?

The Chair: We'll see when we get there, okay? We'll see who will pick it up.

Ms Czarnecki: That's fine. I would like to tell you a little bit about my corner of Toronto and then I'll address the issue of how many politicians are too many.

I live in the St Lawrence neighbourhood in downtown Toronto. Some of you may not be familiar with it. This neighbourhood was developed by the city of Toronto in the 1970s and is now widely acknowledged to be a model for successful urban and community planning. The city took industrial wasteland south of Front Street, near the old St Lawrence Market, and turned it into mixed-tenure housing with some light industrial and commercial spaces. It has schools, parks, transit, a community centre and lots of small shops.

The building I live in, Windmill Line Co-op, is a non-profit housing cooperative. Nearby are condominiums, freehold townhouses, private non-profit buildings and municipal housing. The neighbourhood is one of the safest in the city and people from all the different types of housing work together pretty well on community issues.

From my apartment, I can see the site of Ontario's first Parliament building on Berkeley Street; it serves as a reminder to me that the "government" and "the people" are actually neighbours and fellow citizens.

A neighbourhood like St Lawrence could not be built under an amalgamated Toronto government. It's a quintessentially urban, downtown form, an example of intensification, as the architects say. It's not for everyone.

No one who wants a big backyard and a two-car garage would want to live in St Lawrence. Fair enough. People who believe in the suburban model of neighbourhoods are welcome to their preference, as far as I'm concerned. I just don't want them dominating the civic government that will make decisions about the very non-suburban community where I live.

The radical change in civic culture that Bill 103 would impose, together with the financial measures in other proposed legislation, would put St Lawrence at risk. Without adequate political support for the concept that downtown cores can and should be good places to live, and with either increased property taxes or decreased services, possibly both, the downtown of Toronto would empty out at 5 pm and become an unappealing dead zone.

Since moving to St Lawrence more than 12 years ago, I've been involved in local issues from time to time. That brings me to the second point I'd like to make here, about politicians and bureaucrats. Mr Harris and Mr Leach seem convinced that politicians are the problem: There are too many of them, they are fat cats, they can't be trusted and so on. I won't dwell on the fact that they, and all of you here, are politicians too. Thus, Bill 103 would reduce the current total of municipal politicians in Toronto by more than half.

My experience in local issues has been consistently at odds with this picture. When push comes to shove, I found that the elected officials were the only ones I could rely upon to keep the unelected officials in line. The bureaucrats — and I mean mostly senior managers, department heads and so on — are the ones with attitude in too many cases. They have the huge salaries, they are well entrenched, they know all the ins and outs and they don't have to face the public at the polling booth. Perhaps we need to arrange special screenings for government members of that very acute British TV series, *Yes, Minister*, which depicts these basic phenomena of organizational politics with painful accuracy.

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I think it's important to consider the politician-to-bureaucrat ratio. Cutting the number of politicians in half would mean less control over bureaucrats, unless the number of bureaucrats were cut to the same degree. I've looked at all the government documentation I could find — and there's not much since the government hasn't released much — but I couldn't find even an undocumented claim of anywhere near a 50% cut in bureaucrats — hardly surprising, given that administrative costs make up only 15% of the Metro Toronto budget — and as the committee is well aware, the great majority of studies and reports other than the government's own suggest that the bureaucracy would actually grow in a mega-Toronto.

There's a lot of talk about one fire chief instead of six, but it's either naïve or misleading to pretend that the overall reductions could be on this scale. Bureaucratic organizations just don't work like that. What we'd probably get is a structure with six chiefs, perhaps with deflated job titles for window dressing, and then one superchief. It would be like the Toronto Transit Commission where there are six general managers — a mind-boggling concept — and one chief general manager. The

TTC culture is notorious for empire building. The chief general manager until a few years ago, incidentally, was Al Leach.

Bureaucrats of the salaried sort are one problem; unelected officials parachuted in by the provincial government are another. The potential for corruption exists in all government, at all levels and all parties. Over the years, therefore, we have built safeguards against corruption. The most important is the basic accountability flow: The unelected are accountable to the elected and the elected are accountable for the whole ball of wax to the voters who can toss them out at regular intervals.

I find the provisions of Bill 103 regarding the powers of the trustees and the transition team extremely alarming because they would nullify many of those safeguards. How would my councillor be able to keep these unelected officials in line? They would act in private and report only to the provincial minister. In fact, instead of the unelected officials reporting to councillors, in the Bill 103 model the councillors actually report to the unelected officials. The province's men would have the last word over management of my taxes when I thought I'd voted for a councillor and a mayor to handle that.

The Statutory Powers Procedure Act would not apply to the trustees or to the transition team and their decisions could not be reviewed by courts. The transition team has no fixed dissolution date. Under these conditions, I would like to know — and this would be my question, if I'm allowed to ask it — what safeguards would exist to protect my city and my dollars against a trustee or a transition team member hiring his friends and awarding contracts to his cronies. Is it really necessary to cage the councillors and hand their duties over to a secret club in the proverbial back room?

As you know, this is an election year in the municipalities. I want to use my vote to put good people in charge of my city full-time and I want those people to answer to me if they screw up. If Mr Leach wants the job of running Toronto, let him resign as an MPP and run for city council. In the meantime, I ask the government to withdraw Bill 103. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Mr Colle, you have just about two minutes for questions, and if you'd like Mr Gilchrist to answer that question, that's up to you.

Mr Colle: Yes. That question about the transition team is quite an interesting one and perhaps I'll allow the government to try and answer that. I think your question was, "What assurances are there that the transition team will be answerable to the people and not to the minister?"

Ms Czarnecki: My question was a little more general than that. What safeguards exist against corruption of the smoke-filled backroom variety? I'm sure there must be some, but I don't see it in the bill and I would like to know.

Mr Marchese: The trustees and/or the transition team.

Ms Czarnecki: Trustees and transition team.

Mr Gilchrist: Basically, very simply, the municipal councils will be the ones that oversee all the actual decisions. What the transition team will do as it works through the balance of the next 11 months, working together with staff from the various cities, will be to simply cobble together the most senior levels, the recommended

appointments that would take effect on January 1; for example, that of the fire chief.

The new council could literally, on the first day it meets, January 2, dismiss any or all the people the transition team has put in place, but obviously, as the new council takes over, it needs to have a staff structure, and the transition team is simply there to ensure that, working with those six cities, the right fire chief or the right head of the planning staff or the right head of parks and recreation is in place.

It will also be there to oversee issues dealing with the election. Obviously that is something that has to be co-ordinated, as Metro does not run elections, they're run by the cities, so that will be a function that starts and ends clearly on election day.

The Chair: Will you wrap up, please, Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist: Very simply, all the work the transition team does is recommendations, and the new council has absolute authority, literally, at its first meeting to undo any or all its decisions. So if they want to do anything untoward, it will last for a grand total of one day.

Mr Colle: If I can just have one point of clarification there, it's interesting to note that it says here in the act, "The transition team and the person shall agree on the terms of employment, and the new city is bound by the resulting employment contract."

Ms Czarnecki: Thank you, Mr Colle. That's exactly what I wanted clarified.

Mr Colle: In other words, you can imagine the cost —

Mr Gilchrist: For one day.

Mr Colle: — of the new city council firing —

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): It's a contract.

Mr Colle: — or getting rid of the bureaucrats that are hired by the transition team —

Mr John L. Parker (York East): After one day's seniority, Mike.

The Chair: Order.

Mr Colle: Who's going to sign a one-day contract?

Mr Cordiano: It's absurd.

The Chair: Mr Parker, I just asked the audience and all members of the committee politely to respect each other's right to make statements, and first presenter, we have people in our own legislative committee violating that, so I prefer you to refrain —

Mr Sergio: Can I add a phrase?

The Chair: No, I think we've gone well beyond the 10 minutes. Mr Colle and Mr Gilchrist have had time to have discussions.

Thank you very much for coming forward today. I appreciate your taking the time to make the presentation.

AUDREY FERNIE

The Chair: Would Audrey Fernie please come forward? Good afternoon, Ms Fernie. Welcome to the committee.

Ms Audrey Fernie: Good afternoon. This wasn't planned at all, but I chose as my one issue the transition team. I'll just start with a quote. Mr Gilchrist, it says the transition team "may" be dissolved on January 31. In other words, they may not be.

I have chosen to speak on one issue only, the transition team, described in article 16 of Bill 103. I direct my

comments particularly to the Conservative members. The many programs coming at you have confused the issue.

Bill 103 is not about a megacity. It is not about folding seven elected governments into one. It's not even about downloading, bad as I think that is. In my opinion it's about turning over our elected government to corporate control. It's a coup. I think most of us think coups are only military and that they only happen in South America. This is a coup.

I particularly address the Conservatives because the arrogant, anti-democratic nature of the transition team appals me and I have faith that it will appal you. I believe Mr Harris and Mr Leach are ideologues with simple answers to complex questions, no believable statistics or studies to back them up, except a three-week hurried study, and they ignore three comprehensive studies.

Maybe I'm naïve, but I can't believe that all Conservatives are ideologues. Some of you must have morals and you also face re-election. Did you run on killing democracy? I beg you, on items that offend your morals, to speak out at caucus. If you aren't heard at caucus, have the courage to vote against your party on issues that offend your morals, and even cross the floor if your party is so rigid that it will not allow you to vote against a motion that is against your principles.

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As well as three unelected trustees with absolute power — and I really didn't realize anybody was above the law; I didn't think even Mr Chrétien was above the law, but apparently with the stroke of a pen these people are above the law — we have in article 16 an appointed one-or-more transition team with absolute power which may or may not, Mr Gilchrist, be dissolved on January 31, 1998, when the new elected mayor and 44 councillors take over.

This team is above the law. Article 18 states:

"(1) The decisions of the transition team are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court.

"(2) The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to the transition team."

The team can:

(1) Impose the amount of money the elected council can tax and spend, so if the elected council decided it must raise property taxes to sustain a program, the elected council could be overruled by the unelected team and the program would suffer. Kingston's amalgamated body has been told to cut 15% of spending.

(2) The unelected team hires and fires all bureaucrats.

(3) The unelected team decides the functions of neighbourhood committees and who will sit on them.

(4) The unelected team decides on the integration of municipal services.

(5) The unelected team can sign contracts with anyone and these contracts may not be reviewed. So we could have privatization of our water system, our hydro etc behind closed doors, even possibly the sale of utilities we've built up over the years to friends of the team.

Bill 103 is about getting control of all the cities' services. The cities' power is destroyed without public input. With these terms, could the \$1-billion assets of the cities be given to the province?

The taxpayer will pay for this team. That's kind of ironic. Why are we bothering to have an election? Why are we bothering to elect a mayor and 44 councillors to take office in January 1998? The elected body may find the team has already decided everything, and the team may be dissolved on January 31, 1998, or it may stay on and make all the decisions while the elected body has been elected. Surely that's a loophole, if nothing else, that you should plug.

I ask you Conservatives, is this what you ran on, to destroy democracy? This is a coup. We always thought of coups as happening elsewhere.

Actually there were hints that Bill 103 was more than a merging of seven elected governments into one: the speed, the arrogance. I was in the House when Mr Leach was asked if he'd wait for the referendum, and he answered, "I'll have to give that deep thought — no."

Why did you have to distribute propaganda which cost the taxpayer, not the Conservative Party, \$300,000 if Bill 103 was such a good bill? When the Conservative Speaker ruled the party in contempt, I was ashamed to see every last Conservative stand on a motion in defiance of contempt. Two days later illegal faxes were sent to the board of trade in the middle of the night.

I implore each one of you to examine each item of this bill, and the transition team in particular, in light of your own morals. Speak out in caucus. Have the courage to vote against your party. I don't think you ran on dictatorship.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please. It couldn't have taken 20 minutes for everyone to have forgotten my opening request. Mr Marchese, you have three minutes.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Ms Fernie, for your presentation. It was very thoughtful, I thought, and very well researched as well.

Mr Leach has made a statement around the issue of trustees because he's been very concerned about what people like yourself have been saying about that. On page 4 he responds to people's criticism about the whole issue of democracy being hijacked by this group. He says: "In response to that, I'd like to quote from an editorial I read just last week in the *Ottawa Citizen*" — which obviously he concurs with — "'Far from being undemocratic' the editorial said that the appointment of trustees was a 'critical safeguard' for democracy."

Ms Fernie: First of all, I don't get my information from newspapers. Secondly, I wonder whether we're going to have a Ernst and Young. Actually, I understood the three trustees were different from the transition team.

Mr Marchese: Yes.

Ms Fernie: It's the transition team I'm concerned about. I didn't know about that until Monday night and I didn't hear anybody in the Legislature even mention it until after Mr Sewell mentioned it Monday night. I think it's a separate item. Am I wrong?

Mr Marchese: It is.

Ms Fernie: It is a separate item.

Mr Marchese: I think you've answered it in your presentation, but some of us are appalled by that kind of statement.

Ms Fernie: Yes, I know. I don't consider that a good answer.

Mr Marchese: The fact that these trustees are beyond the law is an incredible thing. How they can say it safeguards democracy when their decisions are above the law, not to be scrutinized and/or adjudicated by any body other than themselves, I think is terribly undemocratic.

Ms Fernie: I was prepared for a fight on privatization, but now it may just happen behind closed doors. The privatization of the water system in England is an absolute disaster. I welcome any comment from the Conservatives because you have the majority in the House and you can do what you want to do. Do you really think there's a point where you morally might think something is wrong?

The Chair: Are you finished, Mr Marchese?

Mr Marchese: Is there more time?

The Chair: You still have about 45 seconds.

Mr Marchese: The government says that right now 72% of Metro's services are already consolidated. I think the system has been working very well between our cities and what is handled by the Metro government. He says what we need to do to make it better is to consolidate it completely and take over the 28%.

Ms Fernie: I don't see why that can't be done. It's too bad they did it too late, nevertheless Toronto has agreed to take one group and another group is taking water treatment. I don't know why that can't be done without all this confusion. Let's wait a year and see if it works.

Mr Marchese: Sure, but what they want with that other 28% is to take over all the cities. They've got 72%, so they're saying: "What we need to do now is control the rest of the 28% and it'll be complete. Everybody will be happy in Metro and we'll be stronger, not weaker." Do you agree with that?

Ms Fernie: No, not at all. I won't be happier; I can only speak for myself.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Fernie, for coming forward and making your presentation this afternoon.

GRAHAM HARLEY

The Chair: Would Graham Harley please come forward. Welcome, sir.

Mr Graham Harley: Thank you, Mr Maves, and thank you to those members who ensured that these hearings would be held. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to speak.

At about the time I first came to Toronto in the early 1970s on what I thought at the time would be a temporary basis, Mr David Crombie was running for mayor of the city of Toronto. One of the chief proposals in his program was the preservation of older city neighbourhoods against the encroachment of wide-scale development, together with various height and mixed-use requirements for new construction.

This plan was specifically designed to prevent the downtown core from sinking into that pit of urban decay all too well known from so many American examples by encouraging the future growth of downtown business, residency and culture. There was much dismissive talk from his opponents of pandering to a fear of change.

Mr Crombie won that election. With remarkable civic sense and sensibility, the voters of Toronto had had a unique vision of their future and chose, long before other cities followed their example, to merge, or entangle if you wish, the past, the present and the future.

I mention this election not only because it was the extraordinary response of the citizens of Toronto, their passionate pride in their city and determination to preserve and nourish it that first sparked in me a love of Toronto which has grown exponentially over the years, but also because it showed an enlightened recognition of what is important in the daily lives of citizens: their neighbourhoods, their environment, the almost muscular sensation of living in a particular ambiance that you help to define and in some ways helps to define you, of being a member of a civic society that actually cares about its citizens and has the mechanisms in place to realize that care.

It also demonstrated that the act of preserving what is fine and distinctive from the past in no way implies any fear of the future or resistance to change. That election was one of the most important steps towards the creation of a contemporary Toronto, a city widely praised by disparate organizations as the best place in the world in which to live. But when voices are now raised in Toronto against the current Bill 103, which promises fair to destroy so much of what that election set in motion, it is the standard dismissive response of its defenders, "You're just frightened of change," they say, as if change, any change however flimsily thought out and hurriedly rammed through, were ipso facto a good thing, and as if opposition to this change were synonymous with opposition to all change. How passé.

What many, many citizens of Toronto are opposed to is not change — there's always opportunity for that — but destruction: destruction of identity, destruction of services, destruction of representation, destruction of many of the things that make this city so brilliantly unique. In the absence of any reasoned defence or explanation of this bill on the part of the government — merely vague and unsupported platitudes about making a city that is already fiscally responsible fiscally responsible — and in light of the downloading of the service delivery, of course there is a growing distrust of why this bill is being proposed.

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You've already heard and will continue to hear many more times the litany of objections that concerned citizens have, but that is your particular hell, and it reflects the fact that these objections are real, considered and deeply felt. These are some of mine. I had a top 10 list, but there's only time for a few.

(6) Not only is there no guarantee that the amalgamation of the municipalities will save money, the virtual certainty, on the experience of other cities, is that it will cost a great deal more. Coupled with the tactic of downloading soft services on to municipalities, the city of Toronto in particular will be, and I quote, "devastated." Yet the government hypocritically continues to insist that its motives are financial and that it has the best interests of Toronto at heart. Why should anybody who lives in Toronto ever trust such an analysis, and why would anybody who represents a Toronto riding ever support it?

(5) Mr Harris, speaking to the Ontario taxpayers' association in the last election campaign, assured them that local municipalities should not be eliminated and that any issue about the transfer of responsibilities to regional governments should be decided by a binding referendum. Not only was the creation of a megacity not included in the Common Sense Revolution platform, and therefore not discussed or voted on, but the leaders of the Conservative Party were at that time actively espousing the preservation of local governments. There is clearly no mandate from the people for this bill.

(4) Every study on this issue, with the exception of the three commissioned by the government, either has not recommended or has warned against amalgamation of this nature. You know this, we know this, the government knows this. Question: Are they fools, are they knaves or do they have a hidden agenda? To service more than half a million people or so, administrative bureaucracy has to increase in order to cope with the demand. Therefore, costs go up and the operation becomes decreasingly economic. A city of 2.3 million people, larger in population than all but three of Canada's other provinces, will inevitably require a considerable bureaucracy. Any money saved on elected officials' salaries is likely to be devoted to the salaries of unelected bureaucrats: a lose-lose situation which denies the citizenry access to decision-making while contradicting the government's stated purpose of cutting down on bureaucracy.

(3) The government refuses even the opportunity to listen to the views of the very citizens whose lives will be most radically affected by this legislation through the various referenda to be held by the municipalities. This is as staggeringly offensive as it is resoundingly obtuse. The Premier himself is on record as saying that such issues should be decided by binding referenda. Municipalities in other areas of the province have been accorded this courtesy and the legislation that allows it has been introduced by this very government.

(2) Municipal councillors are elected representatives of the people at the most immediate, accessible and comparatively non-partisan level. By savagely reducing their numbers and having them serve vastly more constituents than they do now, the bill will strip the citizens of Toronto of access and of their influence on decision-making, influence that will increasingly be gathered in the hands of bureaucrats and party political nominees, who in turn, because of the increased costs of electioneering, are likely to become spokespeople for vested interests.

(1) The indefensible appointment, pace Mr Gilchrist, of three trustees to oversee financial dealings of elected officials; the refusal to allow access to them by members of the public or even the press, while having their undeclared salaries paid for by Metro taxpayers; the failure of the bill to define the terms of their employment or the limits of their powers and responsibilities; the granting of similar powers to the so-called transition team; the prohibition of any challenge to the activities of either group in a court of law: All these provisions smack unmistakably of the old-fashioned extremist regimes of eastern Europe or South America or Asia. An inevitable,

a sad, ultimately a revolting analogy, but then revolution is so often followed by a tyranny.

How could the government ever have come up with this bill? Could it be that they just don't care about Toronto, still less the future of their Toronto MPPs? But even if for some petty reasons they don't, isn't it suicidal to destroy the most important city in the province and a city that ostentatiously works? Is it revenge for real or imagined slights? Surely too petty a reason for any political action, particularly of this magnitude. Maybe, just maybe, they want to milk the cash cow and give it away — cash and cow — in tax breaks to people who are likely to spend them in Florida.

I urge the government members here to ask themselves whether if this were a bill proposed by another political party, they would not in all honesty, in that dark night of the soul when it is always 3 o'clock in the morning, be as puzzled, as furious and as outraged at its provisions and methodology as are most of the people who come here to testify before this committee.

A final analogy: Recently, the famous golden spruce tree in British Columbia was meaninglessly and cruelly cut down at night by a chainsaw-wielding ideologue. This tree, unique in its genetic structure and its golden beauty, has been known even to white men for over 100 years, was sacred to the Haida Indians, and has been a source of wonder to many a tourist. Fortunately, through a speedy alliance of community groups, environmentalists and business concerns, there is hope that the tree's unique DNA can be harvested and used to regenerate it. Even then it will of course take many decades before the tree can return to its former glory.

The government of Ontario is holding a chainsaw to Toronto. I urge this committee to recommend the withdrawal of Bill 103 before the massacre starts. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Harley.

Interruption.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming forward this afternoon and making your presentation.

HELEN McNEILL

The Chair: Would Helen McNeill please come forward. Good afternoon. I know you've been here and you know of your 10-minute allotment today.

Ms Helen McNeill: Good afternoon. I'm going to have to squeeze it to get 10 minutes in. My name is Helen McNeill. I was born in the city of Toronto and I am pleased to say I'm still a resident. Thank you for this opportunity to voice my views and concerns.

Let me begin by saying I'm not against change. In fact, I was one of those in the city of Toronto in November 1994 who voted to eliminate the Metro level of government. We then said clearly we need change and we need simplified government. We voted to start the process by removing the Metro level of government. This was a reasonable approach and one that made sense. Bill 103 makes no sense. It makes no sense because of the widespread havoc it will wreak upon 2.3 million people. The inordinate amount of anger, confusion and expense sparked by Bill 103 does not augur for a smooth transition.

Time does not permit to address both democratic process and Bill 103, so I will confine my remarks to Bill 103. I have to admit I had to read it three times before I finally made a connection. It was only when I read it for the third time and I decided to focus on the intent of the bill that I made the connection.

The two points that had to be connected in my mind were the procedures described in Bill 103 were very similar to those procedures used in a corporate merger or bankruptcy. The first step taken is that of financial control. Then the power and control vested in two appointed bodies, the board of trustees and the transition team, created by Bill 103 are enormous and staggering.

Municipal government is not about things; it's about people. Governance at any level is supposed to be for the people and by the people. Our history is that people have made decisions about major changes that affect them, not corporations, not bureaucrats and not politicians.

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Having said that, I have concluded the intent of Bill 103 is something different than what the government would have me believe. Bill 103, in my opinion, is not about savings, efficiency and accountability but rather about control. As I understand Bill 103, it gives Mr Leach complete control of the province's largest realty tax base and gives him the power to manipulate that base. This investment of control and power in one individual is both unacceptable and dangerous.

I looked at the different components in Bill 103 and I look at them as (1) process and functions; (2) duties and responsibilities; (3) elections; (4) regulations and other matters. That's the way I kind of grouped them in my brain.

Under process and functions, Bill 103 puts the following processes in place: dissolves six municipalities; establishes one council; redefines boundaries; establishes a board of trustees and a transition team. I'm still trying to sort out how the government's mandate to cut the size of government translates into overlooking due process.

How can the stroke of a pen, namely, clauses 27(1) and (2), dissolve something that took a vote to establish in the first place? I suppose the swift answer is that it is legal, but does that make it right? Are we, the people, chattels of the state? Where procedures are in place to deal with the above processes, such as dissolving municipalities and redefining boundaries, then I believe it is my right to be advised when the procedure is being circumvented, changed or altered.

I will now move into the area that I call duties and responsibilities. I'm going to address the board of trustees first.

The Chair: Just one second. I'll tack on some extra time for you. Could the clerks at the back ask the people in the hall to take their conversations away? It's quite distracting. Thank you. Go ahead. I'm sorry, Ms McNeill.

Ms McNeill: It's okay. Clauses 9 to 15 apply to the board of trustees. I find the power and control vested in the board of trustees offensive and beyond credibility.

Clause 9(2): By virtue of this clause, the board has the power to run up incredible costs, hire staff, enter into contracts which are binding to the new city.

Clause 9(12) reads, "The decisions of the...trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court."

Clause 9(4)(e): The board of trustees shall "report to the minister at his or her request."

When I look at the combination of these powers, I shudder at clause 9(12). These people are above the courts. The duplication and costs which will be incurred — and again, I have to say, who is accountable? Where is the open and democratic process?

Clause 9(10), still pertaining to the board of trustees, says, "On or after January 31, 1998, the minister may, by order, dissolve the board of trustees." Well, I'm sorry, the word "may" also implies "may not." It is conceivable that the board of trustees may continue forever if the minister invokes clauses 9(4)(g), 14(2) and 24(1)(e)(i).

Now I'll look at the area of transition team, clauses that apply to their responsibilities, clauses 16 to 21. I find the power and control vested in the transition team even more offensive than in the above.

Clause 16(4) states, "The transition team shall...consider whether restrictions should be imposed on the amounts the new city may raise and the amounts the new city and its local boards may spend in any year..."

Again, clause 16(12): "The minister may" — or may not, in my understanding — "...dissolve the transition team" after January 31.

My interpretation of the above combined two clauses is this: The government will control the budget for 1997 and quite probably until the next provincial election, simply by invoking clauses 16(4)(g) and (24)(1)(e)(i). The impression could be that the government is doing such a good job of controlling expenses, when in fact what could be going on is good old manipulation, and according to clause 18(1) "The decisions of the transition team are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." I ask you, members of the government, is this control or a takeover by the government in the most subtle of forms?

Clause 16(4)(c) reads that the transition team shall "establish the new city's basic organizational structure," and 16(4)(d), the transition team shall "hire...department heads and other employees as the transition team considers necessary to ensure the good management of the new city." What's wrong with what we've got now? It's working very well.

Then again, for the transition team, the decisions of this team are final and shall not be reviewed by the court. When I read all these clauses and put them together, I have to ask you the same question again, is this control? Where is the open and democratic dialogue, or is it a government takeover?

I found one clause, clause 5, that addresses council and it reads — this is under duties and responsibilities — "The city...shall, by bylaw, establish neighbourhood committees and determine their functions." Then I go on and I find that clause 16(4)(e)(i) reads that the transition team shall hold public consultations on "the functions to be assigned to neighbourhood committees and the method of choosing their members." I think this says it all.

My question is, why are we pretending the new council will have any powers other than those dealing with the civic matters, and the very smallest ones at that. The heart of any municipality is the budget. This raises the question, why are we going through the charade of having the charade and expense of municipal elections?

The followings points pertain to elections, and my first question is, what's the hurry?

In his speech to the board of trade on December 17, 1996, Mr Leach said, and I quote, "Restructuring must be in place for the 1997 municipal elections or it just won't happen."

My question is, what won't happen? What is "it"? If Bill 103 is just the beginning of things to come, I think it would be a very good thing not to happen.

But in addition, Mr Leach's statement is not true. I understand that in 1995 Toronto had done some preliminary work on the dissolution of Metro. Why was that work not supported by the government? Were the Toronto recommendations not part of the government's agenda? I ask again and again, why the sudden urgency?

Because I can't get any answers, I've concluded the "it" is about taking control of the capital and expense budgets in the Metro area. I think this is how the \$1-billion fund will be established. Remember, until mega-week the people of Metro were still being told Bill 103 was about amalgamation.

Again, what's the hurry? The government has chosen to ignore the request to slow down, so I conclude the elections must happen in a hurry so the government can tell us we gave them the mandate to take over the responsibility for municipal finances. In all probability we will also be told we gave them the mandate to proceed with mega-dump.

Under the area of regulations and other matters —

The Chair: Ms McNeill, I apologize for interrupting. We're at 11½ minutes. I tacked on some time for you.

Ms McNeill: I'm sorry. What I'd like to say can't wait, and if I can't say it here, where am I going to say it?

The Chair: The members all have —

Ms McNeill: Just let me —

The Chair: — your brief and they can read it. To be fair to all the people who are —

Ms McNeill: I'll ask somebody if they'll give up their time.

The Chair: To be fair to everyone else —

Interruption.

The Chair: Maybe that person can finish reading it for you. That's up to him, but I have to —

Interruption.

The Chair: This was agreed upon.

Ms McNeill: Okay, I'll finish in one minute.

The Chair: No.

1620

Ms McNeill: Just a minute, you've got to hear me.

It is an affront and an insult to suggest anyone would offer amendments to this document which so blatantly undermines the very values on which open and democratic societies depend.

Bill 103 writes the end of democracy at the municipal level, not only for Metro Toronto but for every municipality in the province of Ontario.

The responsibility to stop this tragedy lies with this standing committee. I urge each member of this committee to re-read Bill 103 and try to read it through my eyes.

There is only one answer, even if it means some members of the government will have to cross the floor

of the House. This will take courage and it will reflect integrity.

Who in this province would not vote for a candidate who stands for principle and truth?

The Chair: Mrs McNeill, that's well beyond any allotted time. In fairness to everyone who comes after you, whether they're for or against the bill, we're selected for 10 minutes.

MELVIN ZIMMERMAN

The Chair: Would Melvin Zimmerman come forward, please? Go ahead, sir.

Mr Melvin Zimmerman: J'accuse. I accuse this government of laying the way open to extortion.

J'accuse. I accuse this government of contempt of court.

J'accuse. And finally, I accuse them of treason.

J'accuse. With these words Émile Zola a century ago began a fight for truth, justice and freedom known to the world as the Dreyfus affair. Ultimately, the French government had to retreat, and it was compelled to liberate and vindicate Captain Dreyfus. That government had charged him with treason, but finally it revealed itself to be treasonous.

With this precedent in mind, I will now demonstrate the reasons I have for making these three charges in regard to Bill 103.

The minister, under section 24, and the two bodies, the board of trustees and the transition team, sections 9 and 16 respectively, who report solely to the minister, would have full budgetary powers over the present six or seven municipalities.

I, as a citizen, as a taxpayer, would have no access to members of the board of trustees or the transition team, nor would members of the press. And they would meet with their boss in closed session. Notice, I'm saying they would and I'm not saying will or shall.

They would have the power to transfer moneys, perhaps \$2 billion, from these cities to the coffers of the province. This would in my opinion be unlawful, but if Bill 103 becomes law nothing could be done about it, presumably.

What? Nothing? asked one of my students. I'm a professor at York University. Today one of my students asked me that. What? Nothing? What about judicial review? Good student. You have apparently closed that door by section 12, "Decisions final, no judicial review."

I believe that you are preparing to illegally transfer huge amounts of public funds from Metro's reserve funds, for example, and others, to your provincial funds so that you may deliver a tax reduction to those in Ontario who least need it. This would in my opinion be collective extortion. That was charge number one.

My second charge to you is that the framers and executors of Bill 103 are already in contempt of the entire judicial system of our province or country. In all societies that call themselves democratic, the legislative branch has constitutional limits to its legislation. Every school child knows them as checks and balances. How dare you diss the courts of our land by writing in section 12(1) "The decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court"?

Mr Leach, have you learned nothing from the Speaker's ruling of prima facie contempt of the Legislative Assembly, the brochure incident, number one; plus, number two, the repetition in the incident of the faxes?

Now you are adding insult to injury by your scorn for the judiciary. I think you ought to beware the judiciary. Jamais deux sans trois, as they say in French. Anybody forbidding judicial review in my view is suspect, as they appear to fear it. There would be no other reason for it.

Which brings me to my last charge, treason. Is it not reasonable to call treasonable any action or call for action that usurps powers citizens gave to their elected officials? By cutting short mayors' and councillors' terms of office and their budgetary powers, even while they are in office, which the people of Metro gave them in sacred trust, you are in my view attempting to foist upon us a dictatorial regime. You would have us believe that our only option is to submit, as referenda are futile, not binding. Not true.

Our city, which you call the old municipalities, we love because they are cities that care. Your city, the so-called new city, is one I predict will be stillborn. It is condemned for the same reason God condemned Sodom, because its prosperous inhabitants closed their doors to those who, shivering in the cold, asked for hospitality. Read the Bible again; you'll see that's what Sodom is about, not so much about the sexual orgies. That was the real reason, as I learned in a sermon recently.

Your Bill 103 is doomed. It may well be called, by Ontarians of the future, the bill of Sodom.

The Chair: Mr Zimmerman —

Mr Zimmerman: I didn't use my 10 minutes and you could have afforded the previous speaker —

The Chair: — would you —

Mr Zimmerman: Excuse me, I still have a few more minutes. This is a criticism of the Chair. I think it was unwise and you could have been a little more courteous. I gave up a few of my minutes and I knew that she could have said her piece in dignity. Thank you very much.

The Chair: We did have over 12 minutes from the last presenter.

Mr Zimmerman, there are a few minutes left in your presentation. Would you care to entertain some questions?

Mr Zimmerman: Of course. Any reactions or questions.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): In 1953 Metro was first formed. I see this bill to a large degree as a natural progression for a great city. In 1967 we went from 13 municipalities down to six again. Do you have any comments on that?

Interruption.

Mr Zimmerman: There was some trouble with the mike and I was distracted. Would you please repeat your question?

Mr Young: In 1953 Metro was first formed and in 1967 the six cities were formed again. I see this bill as a natural transition for a great city and I'm thinking, if everyone had felt the same way you do during the last four decades, we'd probably still have 30 municipalities here with 30 mayors and all the additional costs. Do you have any comments on that?

Mr Zimmerman: Yes, my comment is this: I find it odd that I'm making my plea in this Legislature. We have

federal elections, we have provincial elections and we have municipal elections. These three each are proper to the problems — a citizen, when he makes determinations about what his city should be like, what his country should be like, what his province should be like, puts on a different hat and thinks differently.

We can do our own evolving and we have done our own evolving. You are using a bill that is archaic. It is presumably legal. It goes back to the 19th century and it gives you responsibility. But that word "responsibility" I think is a sacred word and you are using the word "responsibility" as though it were the word "power" to effect the change. I am not against change but I am against the method and even the ones who are doing the change. Even if this were an entirely different bill and even if you had taken a lot of time to consult the people involved, even if you had got reports and really debated this in a democratic way and the bill were very different, I still would find that bill that gives you responsibility for us, when you have so much provincial business anyhow, unseemly.

To finally answer your question, we have evolved and we have made changes ourselves over those years without anybody's help.

The Chair: That has exhausted the time. Thank you, Mr Zimmerman, for coming forward and making your presentation today.

1630

KAREN DAVIES BUCK

The Chair: Would Karen Davies Buck please come forward. Good afternoon.

Mrs Karen Davies Buck: Good afternoon. Chair Maves and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the time to make this presentation. For me, Bill 103 has raised serious concerns about the direction, planning ability and democratic intent of this government. If this government wanted less government and fewer costs, it should have entered into a process of mediation with the governments of the Metro area. After all, if mediation will save tax money in the courts of Ontario, should it not also save tax money in the governments of Ontario? Mediation could perhaps have avoided the confrontation that is now taking place.

Robert Farquharson, a deputant in your first round of deputations, echoed my concern around government spending. Why has the province spent \$50,000 on a fax campaign selling amalgamation, another \$100,000 on a study to support it and \$300,000 on a promotional pamphlet that landed Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach in contempt of the Legislature?

To this I would add, why is this government now spending even more of the public tax dollars on TV advertisements? These expenditures don't include or take into account the expenditures the Ontario government's actions have created in counter-reactions at the municipal level. Amalgamation of the cities is a serious government matter that should not be reduced to a public relations campaign.

Let me now tell you what I think about Bill 103. Although the government of Ontario is saying, "Less government at less cost to taxpayers," Bill 103 is not

saying this to me. What Bill 103 is saying is that instead of pursuing a democratic and open forum to forge the new megacity, this government prefers to appoint a board of trustees to oversee Toronto municipal governments. This is more government, not less, and for how long? The dissolution of this board of trustees is left very much up in the air by Bill 103, which states in subsection 9(10), "On or after January 31, 1998 the minister may, by order, dissolve the board of trustees." Bill 103, by saying "may," is certainly lacking definite time lines.

Bill 103 lacks democratic principles. The board of trustees is created as a body corporate. Under clause 9(5)(b), "The board of trustees...may establish and publish guidelines with respect to" all clauses in section 10. It is the words "may establish" and "may publish" that are of concern here. This process lacks full disclosure.

Subsection 12(1) states, "The decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." This is totally unacceptable and not in the spirit of democracy in action. This is a mini-dictatorship forging a megacity until the next mini-dictatorship, in the form of the transition team, takes over and carries on.

Bill 103 is indefinite in its description of the dissolution of the transition team. Under subsection 16(12) it is stated that "On or after January 31, 1998 the minister may," — not "will" but "may" — "by order, dissolve the transition team." This creates concern. Maybe things are going to take longer than they actually think.

Bill 103, in my opinion, is creating more government, not less, and of course both the board of trustees and the transition team will require tax money to exist. Bill 103 is very explicit in describing the source of this tax money; it is to be provided by the old municipalities and then the new municipality. "The members of the board of trustees shall be paid the remuneration fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the reasonable expenses incurred in the course of their duties under this act." Another statement about their finances: "The transition team may hire staff, arrange for facilities and obtain expert services as it considers necessary to perform its functions." Another statement or clause: "The transition team may require that an employee of an old municipality or of its local board be seconded to work for the transition team."

Bill 103 ensures more government and more costs. What happened to common sense and mediation to bring about change? Instead of Bill 103 and its in-your-face, imposed governance, its undefined time lines and undetermined costs, the Ontario government should be proceeding in staged increments of change. To achieve less government, this Ontario government should seriously consider replacement of the Metropolitan Toronto government with, for example, service boards or elected commissioners where they make sense. The TTC and the Metropolitan police might be considered as successful Metropolitan Toronto models.

Bill 103 dissolves the hydro-electric utilities commission of each of the old municipalities to form them into the new Toronto hydro-electric commission. Maybe in this one respect Bill 103 has some merit. The Ontario government could lead with this change to show the residents of the Metropolitan Toronto area how effi-

ciencies of scale can result in less administration and lower costs. The flip side, however, is that many city commissions are already achieving efficiencies and economies that maybe cannot be surpassed.

The extra layer of political decision-making at the Metro level can be eliminated. In my experience, it has in many cases ignored local community needs and interfered with the political decisions made by local councils. Lawsuits and controversy between local municipal governments and the Metropolitan government have cost us a lot. I thought the Metropolitan government was there merely to look after the affairs in a very efficient, cost-effective way for the local municipalities, but it hasn't done that; it's become another political decision-making entity.

Toronto, the megacity, could indeed see a reduction in the numbers of political positions, but would it really reduce costs? I don't think so. Politicians with twice as many constituents as they have now, with too many responsibilities and with too little time would soon vote themselves larger salaries commensurate with their increased responsibilities, would surround themselves with increased personnel and would require greater expense accounts. With politicians further removed from people and their neighbourhoods, Toronto, the megacity, would become a place where we would rather not be.

For the Ontario government, mired in debt, to attack the municipal governments that achieve balanced budgets is unreasonable. I believe this Ontario government must work with the municipalities. As one deputant on Monday pointed out, the province need only reduce its transfer payments to municipalities to start the province on the road to fiscal responsibility. I would like to see this government working with my tax dollars, and everybody else's, in concert with local municipal governments to resolve existing problems, as it is the local municipal governments that may understand these problems best.

In conclusion, I do not support the new Toronto, the megacity. Toronto, for both myself and my family, has always been a community of neighbourhoods. Do not destroy this wonderful Toronto for the new megacity. If the model is American cities, no thank you. If the model is New Zealand and its amalgamations, no thank you. I believe it is our neighbourhoods and our local governments that serve us well and that have made Toronto a model for the rest of the world. Toronto is unique, it is cosmopolitan and it is world-recognized, and more than all that, Toronto as a city is a great place in which we live. We should all be working together to keep it that way.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Buck. You have exhausted your 10 minutes. I want to thank you for coming forward today and making your presentation.

1640

DAVID KIDD

The Chair: Is David Kidd here? Welcome to the committee, Mr Kidd.

Mr David Kidd: Thank you for having me here today. I'm here to talk of the proposed Bill 103. I was born in

the city of Toronto and have lived here and raised a family here. I have worked here for almost 30 years at a variety of jobs in Toronto, Scarborough and Etobicoke.

I have with me a number of notes; I will supply the committee with a copy of my comments at a later date. I would like to look at this proposed bill from the aspects of credibility, service delivery and jobs, and I will finish with a number of recommendations.

Bill 103 is a Trojan Horse around two key issues: It's the downloading of costs to the municipal level of government, and it assists in the increased privatization of all aspects of everyday life. Others have probably talked to you already about the issue of governance, and I will refer to that in small ways, but I mainly want to speak to you on the delivery and provision of services and the decent jobs that public services provide.

Bill 103 and the minister responsible for bringing this bill forward have promised to provide better local accountability to the delivery of services and to do more with less. But the bill is another example of governance by a vision where cost-cutting and deregulation are seen as goals in themselves, where people who don't believe in taxes or laws or public services have become elected, and they've asked some accountants and financial managers to come in to review all aspects of their purview. This is not what people voted for nor what they live in this province for.

People are overwhelmed these days just trying to survive difficult economic times. More and more families have two and three wage earners to make things meet. More and more wage earners have two or three jobs, as part-time jobs are the only positions available. But people want better; they don't want less.

First, let's talk credibility. I would like to ask the members of the committee, would you trust the amalgamation of municipal services such as public health, water purification or libraries to the same people who brought you the amalgamation of the family support plan in Ontario? Do the families that have lost loved ones to unsafe vehicles on Ontario's highways in the last two years feel assured that this provincial government can deliver improved fire safety and building code standards, among other things?

How can this government keep a straight face when it promises to deliver better services when the Minister of Community and Social Services stated just this week that she is having consultations regarding the moneys that were promised last May for improved children's programs? And she is doing consultations, something that has only been happening on this bill after a lot of public pressure.

Of course in the election we heard promises, and in the hockey rink ads the Premier continues to promise, that health care will not be touched, but not a day goes by, not a minute goes by that bed closures are not going on. Waiting lists are getting longer, and a two-tier system is being created as we speak.

The cities of our region are known not just for their architecture or their neighbours or their attractions or their culture; they are also known for the particular services provided. People in the six cities have voted for and supported free public-supported services for years,

where economies of scale are used to provide affordable, accountable services.

The city of Toronto and others are known for their public libraries, public health department, parks and recreation programs, their support of trees, enforcement, animal control programs and projects to restore such things as rivers and bicycle lands. But this bill is about cost-cutting and taking away public discussion about the delivery of services.

Bill 103 on its own gives enormous powers to a non-elected body of three trustees and then, at a later date, an appointed transition team to decide on the future delivery of services. With the inclusion of the announcements to download social assistance, social housing, public health and transit, among other things, this sets the agenda of the trustees and the transition team. With fiscal limitations already placed on municipalities in law, this body will simply represent a cost-cutting body. They will be known as the slash-and-burn brigade.

The services that the six cities are noted for will be reduced — no question — and short-term financial savings will lead to privatization, reducing further the accountability of local service delivery. I don't know if any of you have ever tried to phone one of the private waste disposal firms if you've had a difficulty in getting your garbage picked up, or if you've tried to contact any of the contracted-out services, if you've had a difficulty with your meter reading, your service at your local community centre. This is also going to create a bigger level of government, which will make it much more difficult to reach that group to make any kind of comment on your service delivery. That's one of the reasons the businesses of Chinatown East in the city of Toronto have come out against amalgamation. They are confident in and feel they get a responsive waste disposal program now. The new bill does not guarantee them this.

It's known, and studies have shown, that private sector service jobs pay less, increasing the number of workers who are already in precarious employment. Just in November 1996, we finally have gotten back to the employment levels in the GTA of November 1989, when this recession started. The difference now, though, is that there is two and a half times the official unemployed in the GTA region, and now when they talk about job creation, let's be clear, three out of five jobs advertised as job creation are part-time jobs. Privatization of services will only lead to increased part-time work, contract work, and will make it much more difficult for workers in our economy, workers in our community.

It is ironic that oftentimes in marketing Toronto, the Forbes article and others are commented on as naming us number one in terms of quality of life. That's what they did: They identified Toronto as number one in terms of quality of life. I would like to ask the committee, did the infamous KPMG study look at how Bill 103 will impact on the quality of life in the Toronto region? Just the cost-cutting is not good enough. What makes Toronto a livable, wonderful community to live in is its quality of life, and it's something that leads to economic growth as well.

At this point, I would like to move on to some recommendations. I want to at least get on to that. My first

recommendation would be to downsize Bill 103, which means to eliminate it, restructure it, whatever term you want to use.

As my second recommendation, I would like this committee to respect what President Milosevic of Serbia has finally recognized, the will of the people, and recognize the vote that takes place in the referendums that will be conducted between now and March 3.

In terms of a vision, I reject — the mayors of the four municipalities came up with a plan, and that is not required. What is required is first of all to establish, what are the sizes of municipalities that need to be established in our region? That's something that only the people of the six municipalities can decide. We will then require, as has been said by report after report after report, whether you live in the city of Toronto or Etobicoke or Halton, a second tier of government, a second tier of government that will lead to an assistance in delivery of services over the wider region, and that also has to be established.

Going to the amalgamation of six municipalities and one Metro region into one is not the way to go. You are foisting, as other people have said, a dictatorship on us. It is basically a very Tory coup. I for one reject this bill, and I can only say that as strongly as I can.

1650

Mr Colle: Thank you, Mr Kidd. You mentioned Halton. In terms of the uneven treatment of Toronto, certainly the disparity in treatment of Metro, as you know, this government has basically said that in Halton region there will be three levels of government — they're going to maintain the local, the regional, and they're creating this new GTA level, so three levels — and they've given those 905 areas an unlimited number of years to work out how they want to be governed locally, but here in Metro they've said, "We have decided we're not going to listen and you're to have the megacity, no time, no alternatives, take it or leave it." How do you react to that as a citizen?

Mr Kidd: I totally reject that. It's hypocrisy in the ultimate sense. Also, as a government committed to so-called elimination of red tape, they are now going to have three levels of government over there.

Here's something: A predecessor of this government actually created something called the GO train, the government of Ontario railway, and now of course we're going to call it the Hamilton-Oshawa, the HO train. Of course it has been reduced for our benefit and not for the rest of the people of Ontario.

You would think Halton and other parts of Ontario would like to have amalgamation of services so we can all benefit. That's what we need: a two-tier system throughout the entire region. We also need to have the same amount of time as that given the 905 region to decide on our future, not only in terms of our governance but in terms of delivery of our services.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation today.

LEE WESTON

The Chair: Would Lee Weston please come forward. Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation today.

Mr Lee Weston: In order that I might plan my time properly, I would like to ask a question at the beginning of this that may or may not have been asked. I would like to address the KPMG report, *An Estimate for Potential Savings and Costs from the Creation of a Single Tier Local Government for Toronto*. One of the difficulties I had in doing that is that the report in its introduction states it is based on some confidential reports. I was wondering if someone would be prepared to answer whether this committee is privileged to those confidential reports. If not, I will change the focus of my talk.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm not aware of that reference. The KPMG report was prepared based on the financial information returns for the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 and published budget material for 1996 from the seven municipalities, all of which are public documents available from the city halls themselves or the Queen's Park library. The only other things they may have had were working papers dealing with certain other amalgamations in process right now, for example, Hamilton-Wentworth, where there is a proposal to amalgamate that region into one city. I know there are internal working papers that the cities themselves have put together that I don't believe the cities have published yet.

Mr Weston: Thank you.

"The utter want of municipal institutions giving the people any control over their local affairs may indeed be considered one of the main causes of the failure of representative government and of the bad administration of the country."

That was in the Durham report, 1839, on the Mackenzie and Papineau rebellions. It sort of puts into context how important what we're looking at is: two of the most important and shattering rebellions in our history. We have had very few. It indicates that in terms of what we consider here as municipal institutions, the importance goes beyond whether we are saving 2% or 6%. It has to work. If it doesn't work, the ramifications can be very bad. They will make people's lives miserable and we have quite strong precedents that they can be very damaging to the country as a whole. I follow that up with some references from the UN and from *Fortune* magazine that you've probably heard several times. What it shows is that we've gone in Toronto from a city which was so bad that there was a revolt to being recognized internationally as one of the best cities in the world.

It seems very strange to me that I'm speaking to a government, currently a Progressive Conservative government, and saying that I believe in capitalism, I believe in competition and I believe public review improves results. I believe the reason we have been so successful is that the six cities compete with each other. I think each mayor wants to be the mayor of the best city in Metro. No mayor wants to be seen as mayor of a loser city. They're very easy to compare. We live right next to each other.

We're also in a situation where we don't have other models to follow very well. Ask anyone who lives in downtown Toronto if they would like Metro to be like an American city and you very quickly get a no. And we can't really copy European cities and there are no other Canadian cities to copy, so for our competition we compete with ourselves. The current government has

spoken quite a bit about the importance of competition in private industry. Competition in public affairs is also important.

The Premier has criticized having a three-tier road system: Metro roads, provincial roads and city roads. I support the fact that there are three tiers of government taking care of my interests. Roads which are a Metro affair tend to be roads which affect the traffic flow between the cities. Roads which are a provincial affair tend to be roads which affect a greater area than Metro. Roads which no one who doesn't live in that city really has a great interest in are taken care of at a city level. The idea that the 401 and my three-block-long street are going to be taken care of by the same group of people I think will lead to incredible inefficiencies.

The example I cite is that the residents on my street wanted another street light, so we called the department of roads and traffic for the city of Toronto, talked to our alderman, and got another street light. I would be appalled to think that the process for getting that street light will be the same process that one would use to consider adding more collector lanes to the 401.

It also allows for a subtle and appropriate review of neighbourhood issues: the traffic flow in your neighbourhood, whether you really want a lot of cars going by the public school, what happens if we put in another stop sign. Albany Avenue right now, instead of being one way from Bloor Street to Davenport, reverses direction in the middle. Some residents on that street had it reversed. Now there's a controversy in the neighbourhood because some of the other streets are getting more traffic. That should not be considered by the same group of people who are considering what to do with the 401, what to do with the Gardiner Expressway. Those issues are not similar.

Efficiency comes from taking people with similar interests and similar goals and putting them together to work together. Having people with different interests and different goals and putting them together on a committee leads to inefficiency, leads to increased costs, leads to worse solutions. It's very surprising to me that the Premier has repeatedly attacked the fact that roads are run by the most appropriate level for them to be run by.

North York City Centre is another reason I believe that having six city governments is good. It's really the baby of that mayor. He's cared for it, nurtured it, funded it, poured money into it when, what's the immediate revenue recovery? Well, not very much, but he's really worked on that. He's got his city hall there. He's got a library. He lobbied and got a subway stop. He used his influence to get the Ford Performing Arts Centre to locate there. There is a public skating ring and a public performance area. The city of North York pays for free public performances in that public area. Revenue recovery is zero. What's happened is that there are more businesses there, more tall towers, and each year there are more. It's growing into a real city centre. It is a success.

1700

If there were one government — and I'm going to assume for the sake of argument that it worked out of Metro Hall because I haven't got anything else to work on — I do not believe that North York City Centre would

have ever grown up. It needed a mayor there who believed in his city and wanted his city better than the city of Toronto. Because of that, that's a success. The other mayors are looking at that and other mayors have said that they have looked at that model and want to do that in their area.

What's more, it makes the city of Toronto more efficient. That is efficiency in terms of provision of services, but also efficiencies on another level of efficiencies for the people and their time. They don't have to come downtown. It's better for the environment. It is something that has been publicly stated by Metro that is important to do: develop these alternative centres.

As I say, it's very strange for me with my political views to be addressing a Conservative government and saying I believe in competition. I believe that the competition between these cities is what drives the efficiency. I also believe six brains are better than one. There's an importance in the fact of the way that those cities work with Metro in that their budgets tend to look a lot alike and you get six tax bills to compare. When you only have one tax bill and the guy goes, "I'm doing a great job," you go, "I believe you." This way we can compare. For example, I know my bill as a resident in the city of Toronto is greater than any of the other cities in Metro.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Weston, can I ask you to bring your comments to a close. We are running out of time.

Mr Weston: Okay. I will say that with the KPMG report the thing that concerned me the most is that it seemed inappropriate to me that the 6% figure was quoted in the fact that it not only depends on the amalgamation but on the adoption of more efficient practices.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you. I'll have to ask you to wrap up.

ANN DAVIES

The Vice-Chair: Do we have Ann Davies here please. Welcome.

Ms Ann Davies: Thank you. I appreciate being able to speak to you as part of the democratic process. That line from our national anthem that says, "We stand on guard for thee," means to me the ongoing process of protecting democracy. I voted for the Harris government, only to be dismayed by its lack of regard for the democratic process and its arrogance.

On February 4, 1995, the Financial Post quoted Premier Harris as saying: "We're looking at the possibility of government-initiated, opposition-initiated and citizen-initiated referendums.... We also feel, unlike other politicians, that referendums are a good idea and do not limit the ability to manage a government. We don't think it's unreasonable for people to have these alternatives."

Why then have Metro residents not had an opportunity to vote on whether they want amalgamation? Each of the six cities has its own distinctive characteristics and is cost-effective because they're not allowed to run a deficit. There are already services that are Metro-wide. There's no need for amalgamation of the cities to increase the number of Metro-wide services such as the fire departments. Negotiations could be used to accomplish this.

If Toronto is to remain a place with high quality of life as touted by Fortune magazine and the UN, we need to

pay heed to Michael Keating's article in the *Globe* yesterday morning. He says, "Toronto...should look to successful European cities that have combined economic competitiveness with good public services, not south of the border, where our American neighbours have produced the worst cities in the developed world."

Another worrisome aspect of the lack of democracy is the appointment of a board of trustees. Local councillors received a letter from Mr Leach stating that they could carry on their duties and responsibilities except for any decisions that involve finance. These restrictions are contained in section 10 of Bill 103. The 1997 rigid budget rules are set out in section 11. In section 12, the decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court. This is Ontario, not Hong Kong.

Does this mean that the appointed board of trustees has absolute power over our duly elected councillors? This makes me suspect that one of the underlying purposes of this entire exercise is some hidden financial agenda to pay for the 30% upcoming tax cut promised by the Conservative government.

In section 9, it says that the board of trustees report only to the minister, despite the fact that their salaries are paid by the municipalities. Appointed officials are not accountable to voters. Section 14, paragraph 16, second point, states that the transition team is a body corporate, which is defined in Webster's dictionary as a corporation. Corporations have not been noted, thus far, for their adherence to democracy or for operating in the public eye.

When you read part IV, "Regulations and Other Matters," the powers of the minister to regulate are excessive. Clause 24(1)(f) says he is even able to define any word or expression used in this act that has not already been expressly defined in this act. In section 25, he may apply to the Ontario court for an order requiring any person or body to comply with any provision of (a) the act, (b) a regulation made under this act, and (c) a decision of the board of trustees or the transition team.

Premier Harris admitted, after the passage of the omnibus bill in January 1995, that many MPPs had voted for it without understanding its implications or ever having read or discussed all its details. Are you comfortable with the duties, guidelines, powers and the mandate of the board of trustees and the transition team outlined in this bill? I certainly have grave concerns.

This bill enables the province to download social service responsibilities that David Crombie described succinctly as "wrong in principle and devastating in practice." Thank you.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Ms Davies, for your presentation. We have heard from time to time some of the members of the government talk about the fact that we only get left-leaning types of individuals who are opposed to the megacity. Are you familiar with other people who may not be left-leaning but who are against the megacity proposal?

Ms Davies: Yes, I'm familiar with people who voted for the Conservative government, who were not left-leaning but who are dismayed at the lack of the democratic process. Change is inevitable, and I think any intelligent person realizes that; it's how the change is brought about.

I feel if the democratic process is not involved in decision-making, then we're on the wrong track.

Mr Marchese: The trustees, as you know and have heard from many others, have tremendous powers, which I believe are — and they go beyond the law too. They're not subject to review by the legal system, which I myself find abhorrent. Do you think that the powers of the trustees are consistent with a Conservative view of government? Perhaps an opinion.

Ms Davies: Unfortunately, yes.

Mr Marchese: Thank you very much.

1710

KAREN WIRSIG

The Vice-Chair: I ask Karen Wirsig to come forward, please. Welcome.

Ms Karen Wirsig: Thank you very much. My name is Karen Wirsig and I grew up in North York but I now live and work in the city of Toronto. In fact, I live in Mr Marchese's riding. I am a conference organizer by profession and I am also active in my community as a volunteer.

I work in a small entrepreneurial firm that employs 10 people, and is located in the west end of downtown. All 10 of the employees live within Metro Toronto, eight of us within the current city of Toronto, and most of us have some pretty serious concerns about what will become of our cities if Bill 103 becomes law. Many of my neighbours also share these concerns.

I would like to address my remarks today as much to the media and spectators present as to the honourable members of the committee. Scepticism prevents me from believing that this committee's report will have any bearing either way on the small group in the Premier's office intent on amalgamating the municipalities of Metro, apparently at any cost.

We must make sure that the people of Ontario hear the full range of discussion and debate on this issue. Ensuring that people remain informed and able to participate in the political process is crucial in a democratic society. In this particular case, the people living in Ontario must know how many of our concerns and suggestions were contemptuously ignored, if the government proceeds with its agenda.

To offer a glimpse of where I'm coming from on the issue of amalgamation, I'll describe the city that I want to live in. It is a diverse and healthy city, where people can live, work, raise children, learn, start businesses, drink their tap water, afford public transportation, involve themselves meaningfully in community issues, participate in cultural events, know and respect their neighbours and feel safe no matter who and where they are.

What I foresee happening if Bill 103 and the other pieces of legislation which immediately follow it and which can't be isolated from it are passed is the devastation of the place where I live, and I want to underline I don't think we can look at Bill 103 in isolation.

The core of the city, the place I call home, will be abandoned as taxes in the new city of Toronto rise and services decline so that it cannot hope to compete with the 905 region. The division between the 416 and 905

regions has not even been addressed by Bill 103 or by any legislation announced so far.

I would like to flag other aspects of Bill 103 in its current form that I find shocking. These relate to the ways in which the legislation has been presented and how it is to be implemented.

First of all, Bill 103 bears very little relation to the actual municipal region that gives the bill its name: Metro Toronto. Just as one can go to an office supply store and purchase, for about 50 cents, a generic will or contract, it seems as though the government has gone to some kind of legislative supply store, located perhaps in a suburb of Washington, DC, or Calgary, and has bought a generic form that reads "Bill number," fill in the blank, "The city of," again fill in the blank, "act." You would be able to find this form in the section of the store called, "Forms for effectively unloading those pesky municipalities you don't want to pay for any more." We'll become a world-class city all right, but I'm not sure why, in this context, this is a good thing for the vast majority of us.

Second, the bill proposes to reduce the number of democratically elected representatives. We now have 106 councillors for the 2.3 million people in Metro, and that works out to one councillor for every 22,000 people. Already it can be difficult to get a local politician on the phone to discuss urgent local matters. Imagine when the number of councillors is reduced to 44. That works out to one councillor for every 52,000 people.

The final shocking aspect of Bill 103 that I want to mention today is the appointment, not election, of two incredibly powerful teams to make sure that the government's agenda is carried through to the letter. Their powers over the structure of the new city and its spending are virtually limitless, according to the bill. There is really no avenue of appeal of their decisions, unless of course you happen to know the Premier or the minister personally, I guess. Already, the first such team, the board of trustees, has been ordered not to talk to the press. These people are operating, and will continue to do so, completely outside the democratic process.

I will end my remarks here by underscoring that Bill 103 in its current form is entirely unacceptable and very likely to bring my city to ruin. At minimum, the three issues I've mentioned need to be addressed before the legislation is passed: The entire GTA needs to be restructured under the same bill; we must retain our current level of public, democratically elected representation at the city level; and finally, the power of the appointed teams must be severely limited and their actions open to public scrutiny.

The Vice-Chair: I now call on members of the government. Are there any questions?

Mr Parker: Ms Wirsig, thank you very much for appearing here this afternoon. Thank you for your comments and your perspectives. You touched on a number of points. I don't know if we'll have a chance to follow up on all of them but I'd like to follow up on one.

You gave a bit of a vision of the city you want to live in as one that is diverse, healthy, one where you can drink the water, one where there are cultural events and one where you feel safe, and I appreciate that.

In the area we now call Metro Toronto, about 100 years ago there were 30, 50 separate municipalities. Over

time they have consolidated. In 1953 we had 13 municipalities that got together and formed Metro. Within Metropolitan Toronto we had 13 separate local municipalities. In 1967 those 13 further consolidated and formed the present six.

What is it about a further consolidation of those six, within the boundaries of the present Metropolitan Toronto we've been living with for the last 40 years, that would undermine all of these characteristics that are important to you?

Ms Wirsig: I think my presentation made it fairly clear that it's not necessarily the changes to the city that I oppose; it's the way those changes are going to be brought about. What I'm most concerned about is that if three or four good friends of the Premier who clearly support him are chosen to implement not only the regulations of the new legislation but also the structure, hire all the top bureaucrats, what we're going to end up with is a city that's not necessarily reflective of the full diversity of the current population.

I'm concerned then that services will be privatized, that we won't have access to our elected representatives in order to effect real changes that we think are important in our local neighbourhoods and that in effect we won't have a say any more, that corporations will move in and take decisions and use their access to those members of council to invoke their own agenda on our city.

Mr Parker: Do I understand then that you're less concerned about the actual possibility of amalgamation than you are about the process of getting there?

Ms Wirsig: I think I was quite clear too in saying that amalgamation can only happen if we take the GTA into consideration. To create a false border between Metro and the rest of the GTA to me seems stupid. I don't know if any report so far would have suggested that, certainly not one that I've heard of. Most of the reports we've heard on the city, on the GTA issue, have said that we must include all the municipalities in the GTA in any kind of regional structure. So amalgamating the six cities within Toronto into one bigger city doesn't seem to solve any kind of problem that exists between the 416 and 905 regions.

Mr Parker: I'll just mention that a Greater Toronto Services Board is part of the overall vision that's being implemented here, not in this act —

Ms Wirsig: Will it be elected?

Mr Parker: — but it is part of the overall proposal.

Ms Wirsig: Will it be elected, and what kinds of powers will it have?

Mr Parker: We'll see more about that down the road.

You mentioned representation —

Ms Wirsig: When?

Mr Parker: We're dealing with Bill 103 here, and I want to touch on another point you raised. You commented on representation. You indicated that with the proposal in Bill 103, there would be one representative for every 52,000-odd residents.

Right now, far and away the bulk of the municipal work done in Metropolitan Toronto is done at the Metro level: 72% of the spending is done at the Metro level, the bulk of the taxing is done at the Metro level and that's where most of the big decisions are being made, at the Metro level. At the Metro level right now we have one

representative for far more than 52,000 people. In my community we have one representative at Metro who is responsible for a constituency of over 100,000 people. Can you give me your thoughts on that?

Ms Wirsig: Can I ask for clarification? When you say "the bulk of the work done," how are you weighting that work? In terms of how it impacts people where they live or in terms of the money spent? Are we talking about money work or —

Mr Parker: I'll take it on either basis.

Ms Wirsig: Personally speaking, the city of Toronto offers a lot of services to me that I rely on that no other level of government obviously is providing. I agree too that Metro offers an important level of service, including transportation and water provision, but what I'm concerned about is that we won't have the checks and balances we currently have in this system. At least now —

The Vice-Chair: I'm sorry, I have to cut you off. Thank you very much for making your presentation.

1720

EBERHARD ZEIDLER

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call on Eberhard Zeidler, please. Welcome, Mr Zeidler. You may begin.

Mr Eberhard Zeidler: We are being told that no matter what our opinions are, amalgamation is a reality. I am probably wasting my time protesting it, but I feel it is important, for history's sake, to take a stand.

What is amalgamation going to solve? There are issues in any system that need adjustment and correction. The question is, will they be better resolved by calcifying an outdated political structure? I say "outdated" because Metropolitan Toronto, which in 1954 was set forth as a shining example of how a city can control its growth, has jumped its borders and now its problems cannot even be discussed without taking into account the greater Toronto area, which includes four million people, not the 2.4 million people who face amalgamation. The GTA is the first problem that needs to be addressed, not a megacity.

A pamphlet issued by the government of Ontario that tries to sell the idea of a megacity states that the Ontario government realizes this problem and that "a new co-ordination system of governance is in the works." Isn't it a horrible, tragic mistake to resolve an issue that does not have to be resolved but leave the burning issue of the GTA unresolved until later, maybe much later? Meanwhile the hulk of Metro Toronto is transformed into a megacity that will serve neither the people within it nor the area it effects, namely, the four million who live in the GTA.

We are proud that we have one of the most livable cities in the world. That is exciting. We have achieved a metropolitan lifestyle that can be favourably compared with London and New York. "Toronto is New York run by the Swiss," said Peter Ustinov.

Notwithstanding such comparisons, what exactly are we talking about? We are talking about the core, the heart of this metropolitan conglomeration, Toronto itself. The heart has to be kept beating and cannot be amalgamated because all the taxes, transportation and emotional feeling about the city start with Toronto. It is easy in the

battle between boroughs to neglect this and say that North York also has a downtown district. Three cheers for Mel Lastman for making it so, but North York is just a sub-downtown that would not exist the way it does if Toronto were not vibrant.

When comparisons are made we often think only of our homes, and luckily Toronto provides good, diverse housing for many people. However, if we think of a place to work, then Toronto, the borough, becomes the heart for all. It produces the tax money that makes the region vital, and through this work the tax money passes into the hands of governments. The city of Toronto, however, has to battle to raise its municipal money mainly from house taxes. If this system continues, it makes it viable only for the rich and the poor to live downtown and pushes out the middle class.

If you pay some \$300,000 to \$400,000 for a house in Toronto because of the land value, and you pay substantially less in the suburbs for the same house on a much larger lot, then the Toronto house is closer to your place of work and reduces the cost of public transit and roads. The house outside the city core needs public transit or a road for which the downtown house now pays a disproportionate share through its house tax burden.

It makes these areas very unstable as you can only live there during the time in your life when you make enough money, then you are forced to move. If those who use public transit and the road system to get to work had to pay their share of transit costs, there quickly would be a desire for higher density in these areas.

Furthermore, the megacity will encourage business to move outside the metropolitan area to get inexpensive land and taxes. It is therefore important — no, essential — to build legislative control around the GTA so that businesses and housing are not free to jump these borders.

We have to slowly rebuild the density of the GTA, which would provide the money and the rationale for an effective transportation system, which would include the airport and such institutions as York University.

Yes, we are overgoverned. We have Toronto, Metro, the GTA, the province and the federal government. It is not practical to have five controls. However, instead of reducing the lowest level, which deals with people and their very special and different identities in these areas, we should amalgamate Metro with the GTA and put most of the services — the 70% currently administered by Metro — into the hands of the GTA, leaving the historical borough system intact.

Toronto has existed for 200 years and has done well in its government. However, there are villages that have grown up out of proportion in the last 10 to 20 years that do not have such historic bondage, so the area within the GTA could be ordered in a number of boroughs that deal with these respective constituencies. This way we could have a government that can deal with regional issues as well as the individual issues of each borough. Mississauga, North York, Toronto etc all have different issues to deal with and all have to be accommodated, not only on a regional but also on a personal basis.

The Ontario government has tried to make the case that amalgamation will save money. However, enough examples in North America have shown that bigger

governments create bigger expenses per capita. Better coordination between the GTA and the boroughs has been suggested as a better way to save.

Expand Metro into the GTA and set up a system through provincial legislation that makes jumping borders for cheaper land impossible. Keep in principle the boroughs and cities that have developed in Ontario's long history. This is the way most great cities of world stature have organized themselves. Look at Paris and its arrondissements and Berlin and its stadteile. Perhaps as a side-light, like Berlin or Singapore, we should make the GTA with its borough system its own city-state, responsible only to the federal government. That would really be a saving.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. We have questions from the Liberal caucus.

Mr Cordiano: Thank you, Mr Zeidler. I'm certainly honoured to have you address us and I want to congratulate you for your lifetime achievement and your contributions that have made this one of the best cities in the world to live in.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr Colle: I want to express my humility in addressing you. I think the message you're giving is essentially that there is a very simple alternative to the megacity madness that's staring us right in the face, that has been documented and is certainly in evidence around the world. Could you just summarize that again? It seems this government is saying, "This is the only, one solution." Could you state again what you think the alternative is and the clear path that is a viable future for Metro and the GTA?

Mr Zeidler: I have said the GTA is the new border of Metro. Because Metro can't work any more, most of the construction is happening outside its area. There has to be a legislative body set around the GTA that prevents further border jumping because the density can be achieved for many more people than four million who live within that border.

The other thing is, how do you deal with the 25% that you have not metropolized, so to speak, at the moment? These are the personal things that affect people. They cannot be done if you break up the four-million-people GTA area into a 2.4-million group that seems to be the big boss and controls everything and then the other people into a group of 500,000 or 800,000 people. It would be much better if that area is broken up like the arrondissements in Paris, into groups like Toronto, like North York, and of similar area.

Mr Colle: I do want to again mention your excellent work on the North York Performing Arts Centre. That's certainly one of your legacies and I congratulate you for your contribution.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Zeidler, for coming forward and making your presentation today.

1730

RICHARD D'IORIO

The Chair: Would Richard D'Iorio please come forward. Good evening, Richard. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation this evening.

Mr Richard D'Iorio: Thank you for letting me speak today. It's certainly a tough act to follow. I'm here today for a number of reasons: principally because I'm a resident of the city of Toronto, but also because I'm a member of the Toronto arts community and I have a background and an interest in urban planning. But I'm here first and foremost because I'm a resident of the city of Toronto.

Mr Zeidler pointed out the potential ramifications that this bill could have on the downtown core. That's of great concern to the Toronto arts community, and I'm sure it has been reiterated many times throughout these proceedings.

When I set out to go through this bill and read it in depth, I must admit I was actually frightened. I've never been frightened by a piece of legislation like this. You read through it and you go through definitions and the definition section is fine. You're sort of comfortable with that.

You get into part II of the bill, and the existing bylaws will remain in force, employees of the old city will be incorporated in the new city. You get a sense that this is chaotic and somewhat problematic: How are these folks going to sort things out? The bill gives you the impression that it will all be sorted out in time: "Trust us."

I just don't see how it can happen so smoothly, unless of course extraordinary power is given and exercised by the trustees and the transition team, and that is fairly frightening. It's something which to me is almost like removing a level of our democratic process in this country and in this province. We elect our federal leaders, we elect our provincial leaders and we elect our municipal leaders; we have two tiers of municipal leaders. My sense of this part II, the transition team and the trustees, is that what we're in effect doing is just having two elected levels of government.

The section that I immediately honed in on was the trustees section. It's perhaps the most insulting part of the bill. The citizens of the cities in Metropolitan Toronto have elected their municipal representatives. That means these people have confidence in their officials, or at least as much confidence as a democratic system can provide. In my mind, they should maintain this confidence until they are proven to be irresponsible in their actions.

Why trustees? What have these municipal representatives done wrong? I've heard something being suggested in East York. Beyond that I haven't heard anything else specific.

We elected these people. We like these people, a lot of us do. We elected these people to perform a job and we elected you to perform a very specific job. In my mind, there has been no evidence that has come forth that leads me to believe that any of the councils as collective bodies have compromised the constituents they represent. So my first recommendation is that we remove any references to trustees and that we use the existing legislation to deal with any matters that come up in terms of wrongdoing in councils.

In my mind this provincial government is, with this bill, attempting to do something that it did not set out to do in its agenda that it mentioned to everyone in the last provincial election. The amalgamation of the cities of the

new Toronto was not part of the Tory mandate in the election campaign, and that's important. If you were elected with this as a mandate, then I could understand. This is democracy. Fine.

In my mind, proceeding with a 1997 transitional year, with our elected municipal officials being apprehended in their duties as our representatives, would be the greatest insult to me and my community. While you may be able to legally follow through with interrupting democracy at the local level, you could also probably legally remove all municipal representatives across the province and run all decisions through the office of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. This, in my mind, might be more honest.

In my mind, if you proceed with this 1997 transitional year and with the trustees as set out in Bill 103, you're challenging the will of the people of the cities of Metropolitan Toronto. We voted you in and we voted them in, and in my mind that makes both of you equal. The fact that you, the provincial government, can legislate the city of Toronto staff and councillors to submit to strip searches each time they exit city hall to make sure they haven't made off with the old city stapler, in my mind, is purely the result of constitutional error. The fact that you can do it doesn't mean you should.

To add insult to injury, you are asking us, the citizens of Toronto, to pay to have the people we elected treated like criminals. As the people's representatives for the province of Ontario, you are responsible for municipal affairs, and I respect that. I am asking you to respect me and the citizens of the city and act accordingly.

If there is no evidence of wrongdoing, don't suspend local democracy. These are our councillors, and while I can tell you that I wouldn't necessarily vote for all of them, I would do, and am doing, everything in my power to ensure that their duly elected positions are preserved fully for the terms that they are serving, just as I understood when I voted in the last municipal election.

My suggested changes are: Remove all references to a board of trustees and change the transitional year to 1998 with a new council. I should also mention that my first and foremost recommendation is not to proceed with Bill 103.

Finally, in closing, respect the ruling of the Speaker of this House, respect the principles of our electoral system and respect your councillors unless they are proven guilty of something.

One last recommendation: Make amends by removing your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please. Order. The next outburst, folks, we're just going to have a five-minute recess, so I'd appreciate — I've asked several times, over and over and over again, please refrain from applause and any other comments from the audience.

Mr Marchese, you have about two and a half minutes.

Mr Marchese: Thank you very much, Mr D'Iorio, for your presentation. I have a number of questions but I'm going to focus on one particular part of Mr Leach's presentation, where he says the reason, more or less, why we need to amalgamate is because we have an opportunity to create a governance structure that will save money, remove barriers to growth and investment and help to create jobs.

He says, "We have been clear about our intentions to create a new and unified Toronto from the start." Well, that's not true exactly. At the start, he was opposed to this. He wanted to get rid of the Metro government, so why he says they've been clear from the start is unclear to me. The Premier had different intentions too while in opposition and during the campaign.

But it seems clear that they are trying to do several things: save money, remove barriers to growth and create jobs. From what you've heard, from your experience, is it your sense that somehow amalgamation is going to do any of these things or that the quality of life might even be improved? Will it do any of those things for us? For you?

Mr D'Iorio: I think it's the greatest threat to our prosperity and that the recommendations of the four mayors are a reasonable alternative. I see nothing in this that leads to any of those aims.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr D'Iorio.

1740

MICHAEL MÜLLER

The Chair: Would Mr Mike Müller come forward, please. Good afternoon, Mr Müller. Welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes, almost, this evening to make your presentation.

Mr Michael Müller: Thank you, Mr Chairman and committee members. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about Bill 103, the act that intends to replace the seven existing municipal governments in Toronto with one megacity.

As an architect and planner, I have some understanding of cities, of urban space and its functions. I grew up in New York City and witnessed the growth of the skyline with all the new high-rises. I also witnessed the race riots in the streets when we could not go to our schools because of the people who were there at the bottom of the heap. I've lived in Frankfurt, the banking centre of Germany, and in Berlin, a political hotbed when the wall was still up and it was quite political. I've even lived in Port of Spain, Trinidad, which is a country the size of Metro. But I have come to love Metro Toronto and its culture and have lived here for over 22 years.

As a community volunteer, I have been on the boards of a seniors home help agency, a social planning council and my ratepayers' association. Thirteen years ago I became involved in the development of our local community centre, and have been the chair of its advisory council for the last five years. During those years, the city of Toronto had no increases in its realty taxes, which meant we had to be very creative in providing services while avoiding the alternative form of taxation, user fees.

There is nothing wrong with the municipal governments in Toronto. They are solvent, their structures are sound, and they have been operating for over 150 years. Sure, they can improve, just like we all can, but you don't tear down a building when you need to change a lightbulb or put in an elevator shaft. This proposal to do away with these cities does not make rational sense, but then this bill is not about megacity; it is about democracy and public accountability.

I don't understand how any elected official who believes in representative government can support this flawed legislation. And, frankly, I do not see any of you here in this room, in good conscience, supporting the removal of elected officials of successfully functioning municipalities, where Toronto among them has been recognized internationally, for these officials to be replaced by hand-picked appointees responsible to only one person: the minister. You would not stand for it at the federal level; you must not be party to it at the municipal level.

Since "common sense" resulted in this bill, let us use critical sense to review it.

Consider paragraph 9, the board of trustees. They are an appointed body corporate that shall review, amend and approve operating and capital budgets when they consider them appropriate. They will have full control over the spending of our taxes and in paragraph 10 can tell our elected councillors what they can and cannot do. Is this the safeguarding of public assets or a hostile takeover? Then there is the gag order on financial transactions in paragraph 13 and the removal of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act.

But none of this compares with the placement of the decisions of the board above judicial review in section 12. Draconian, don't you think? Have you considered the democratic principles you are violating by even proposing this bill, let alone supporting it?

The plot thickens in paragraph 16 with another appointment: the transition team. Oh, yes, there will be elections in November as required in paragraph 22, but they are really a mockery of the electorate because the real power rests with the team, who, as per paragraph 16, shall recommend further legislation to entrench their position, impose restrictions on the amounts the city may raise and spend, and, you will note, report this to the minister, not to the taxpayers. Truly a new form of taxation without representation has been created here. They shall hire staff and, under paragraph 17, be the employer of that staff: a government within a government, to be paid for by taxpayers who have no judicial recourse against the team.

Finally, they shall establish the new city's basic organizational structure. What then is the purpose of the 1997 elected council? Is it only to give superficial legitimacy to this team?

Once again, the decisions of the team are final, above judicial review and not to be questioned by a court. The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply and the freedom of information act is gagged.

The setup is simple: If you want to control another company or another government or another country without being obvious, you let the shareholders or the electorate of that company or country think they are electing the board, the council, while you put your people into key positions with all the power. The council makes motions while the team takes the actions.

Why? Why go through all this turmoil? Just so that all of the services in the city can be tendered out, thereby limiting municipalities to being only the holders and enforcers of contracts? Why? Why go through this mess of hearings and costly explanations on television? Why

not save the money and skip the election and just set up the big MT right away, the Ministry of Municipal Toronto, the shadow government which this bill creates?

There are other ways of achieving the same effect without trampling on democratic principles or destroying several hundred years of urban culture in this city. Are you so intent on creating an autocracy where the ordinary people are expected to obey the laws, to pay the taxes and not to complain that you need to change local representation to 1 to 50,000? Democracy stems from a philosophy of fairness, and to be fair, at this rate of representation, Ontario should only have 200 or so municipal councillors, with 44 of them in Metro. Toronto then becomes the fourth largest "province" in Canada.

We will now have big government at all three levels with this bill. This has been tried in the US and been shown not to work. However, Bill 103 implicitly recognizes the need for local municipal councils by disguising them as neighbourhood committees. The act calls on the team to determine how to choose them but shies away from outright electing them and paying them as the municipal councillors they are. As a volunteer, I know the amount of time and effort it takes simply to run or advise on one community centre. To try to advise on a neighbourhood and all the different aspects that a municipal council takes on would be a full-time job in and of itself, which it is at the municipal level.

If the intent of Bill 103 is to cut the deficit and reduce the cost of government, there is no rational basis for this bill. You can't do it to the 416 area without doing it to the 905, because it creates a hole in the doughnut where the cream filling is supposed to be.

I urge you to reconsider and rescind Bill 103 in light of what I have said and of all that is being presented at these hearings. Please do not go down in history as a provincial government that destroyed municipal democracy and took away the accountability of municipal elected officials to the taxpayer.

I thank you again for this opportunity to speak.

The Chair: There are two minutes remaining for Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Mr Müller, for your comments.

Let me just go on record very definitively, because you and a number of the previous presenters — unfortunately, because of the way the rotation works, we weren't able to speak to their presentations — the premise behind your comments, with the greatest respect, is absolutely flawed, absolutely incorrect.

The trustees, once the existing councils approve their budgets, which I think you and I as taxpayers would expect them to do — that's what they do every year — are merely there to oversee, to make sure there are no deviations. That's it. In other words, once the existing councillors have decided, whatever those expenditures are — that is up to them to decide — and once they have voted on that and it becomes the official budget for this year, the trustees are merely there to control.

You want a specific reason why that's needed? In the recent amalgamation in Halifax, there were cost overruns for one reason and one reason only: the extraordinary — in fact many councillors have said illegal — severance

packets that were given to senior bureaucrats who were bought out as part of the deal, a \$20-million variance from what was budgeted. What have they said? If they had had trustees such as we've proposed here, they would have had the control to ensure that was not done.

The bottom line is, this is not about another level of bureaucracy. This isn't about taking away accountability. This does nothing more than what the auditors of the cities do themselves, only this is done in a timely fashion.

If the council of East York does as they have suggested according to their motion to review a way of giving away their city hall, I don't think there's a single citizen of East York, whose taxes have paid for that building, who would agree with that decision, and you and I as taxpayers in this city would have, in a timely fashion, the information we would need to be able to react accordingly.

Quite frankly, some of the other things — "gag order." There is no gag order. It's just exactly the opposite. The same protection is being afforded to people under the freedom of information act —

The Chair: You're coming to the end of your time.

Mr Gilchrist: Very quickly, if your pay or something else is protected right now under that act, the trustees can look at it, ie, in the connection of a severance packet, but if it was protected, they are also guaranteed not to disclose that information. I would have thought you would want that similar protection.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Gilchrist. You've come to the end of the time allotted. I want to thank you, Mr Müller, for coming forward tonight and making your presentation.

1750

MICHAEL WALKER

The Chair: Would Michael Walker please come forward. Good evening, Mr Walker. Welcome to the standing committee on general government.

Mr Michael Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Michael Walker and I'm the councillor for ward 16 in the City of Toronto. Yes, I'm a local councillor. I know the minister has rendered judgement on all of us, "Off with your head and off with all of your heads," but at least for now, I am still here to represent the citizens of ward 16. You may not be willing to listen to Michael Walker, city councillor, but you should listen to them. I know that I speak for them today.

The city of Toronto has an international reputation of being one of the best cities in the world in which to live — and I emphasize to live — and work. Our system of local government is one of the reasons why Toronto is number one in surveys from *Fortune* magazine to those conducted by the United Nations.

One of the big factors in the success of the city has been the level of accountability and accessibility that local elected representatives have provided. The province's plan to amalgamate the seven municipalities clearly removes effective accountability and representation from local government. The provincial government has failed to show that amalgamation would be beneficial both in terms of accountability and financial savings.

The provincial government has ignored a basic principle of democracy — the delivery of coordinated, responsive services. Local government provides a vehicle where the concerns of individuals and neighbourhoods are addressed, and this will be removed if amalgamation becomes reality. People may not always get what they want through their local governments — Mr Müller has been one of those — but overall they feel they have been heard from and thus can support the final outcome. That's displayed week after week in the operation of the city of Toronto and the other municipalities here in Metro.

Contrary to what the provincial government would lead us to believe, there will not be savings to the taxpayers through amalgamation. All the experts agree that amalgamated cities cost significantly more. None of the 25 reports cited in the province's own advertising pamphlet supports elimination of local governments. Even the report prepared for Minister Al Leach refuses to commit itself on savings and ignores the fact that some of costliest services such as police and transit are already amalgamated.

Many residents share the concern that the bigger the ward, the less accountable the local politician will be to local voters.

Even those who support the concept of a megacity are very concerned with the government's proposal to download responsibilities for funding and delivery of services to it. The services being downloaded include general welfare, family benefits, social housing and homes for the aged, to name four. Even if the provincial government foots the bill for education, it still leaves local taxpayers in Metropolitan Toronto with an additional \$530-million tax increase — all that just to stand still.

Put another way, research conducted by staff of the City of Toronto estimated average tax increases under the province's plan to download provincial programs would result in significant tax increases such as: per household, \$400 a year; per business, \$7,900 per year — small businesses on our retail strips will be hit hardest; per industry, \$4,900 a year. I've rounded those figures.

As another Michael Walker, from the small-c conservative Fraser Institute, says, a megacity will be incredibly inefficient. The transition costs we have to pay up front are the most certain aspect of this whole exercise: \$400 million, conservative estimate; \$1 billion, liberal estimate, according to Metro's own staff. Our taxpayers have to pay for that, and for what? For less effective neighbourhood democracy and a huge new bureaucratic local government.

I'd like to point out that this tax does not include the devastating tax increases that will result from the provincial tax plan, actual value assessment or whatever its latest version is. I remembered it, but forget the name of it right at the moment. Under actual value assessment — I'll pass around one of these folders that shows how unjust it is — the average increase for Toronto homes will be \$413.88. The tax increase will be a whopping 16%. On older homes the increases could be significantly higher. Approximately one fifth of Toronto's houses will face tax hikes of up to 40%. Clearly many residents,

especially senior citizens and young people just starting out, will be facing real financial hardships, even economic eviction.

Mike Harris, who I supported in the last election, is known as the Taxfighter, but he will become the Taxhiker if the government goes ahead with these proposals. Actual value assessment should be abolished. With hospitals being closed, with police budgets being cut, with no essential service secure, actual value assessment is a malignant idea brimming with noxious overtones.

Consider: With over \$160 million to be spent on each yearly reassessment under actual value assessment, how can you in government responsibly justify employing hundreds and even thousands of new civil servants or contract people to guess what homes used to be worth the year before, when in the same breath you are firing thousands of nurses, technicians and support staff in hospitals all across this province?

In light of the above, I'm shocked to hear that Minister Leach is still undaunted in his desire to eliminate local government. His own riding will be one of the hardest hit, from the wealthy north to the working poor south. I'm at a loss to understand what more would be needed to change his mind that in his view "a single unified city is the most appropriate move for this community."

Clearly, for the reasons outlined, that is not an appropriate move. Previous deputants have said that. The health and vitality of a great city is at risk if the provincial government goes ahead with this plan. I emphasize to you it is a vital and great city. An endorsement of any proposal of reform to government structure must include full and meaningful public consultation and result in more effective local government and ensure real tax savings. This provincial government's proposed legislation fails on each of these principles.

I'm for strong local government, I'm for local option assessment, I'm for responsible democracy and I'm for the people. What are you for?

Mr Colle: Thank you, Councillor. I just want to get something straight. In terms of the impact on property taxes, you're saying that the download of \$530 million on Metro will amount to about a \$400 increase per home.

Mr Walker: Yes.

Mr Colle: Then the \$413 you mentioned is separate, for the market value assessment download?

Mr Walker: That's right. The \$413.88 is for AVA or market value assessment. I can leave these with you. They make a good case why he shouldn't do it.

Mr Colle: The thing, though, that I haven't seen any of the cities factor in is the other Trojan Horse, and that is the removal of the business occupancy tax, which is about \$600 million that the provincial government has taken off business. Has anyone done any calculations of what's going to happen to property taxes on the residential side if that is picked up on top of the other two tax increases?

Mr Walker: I don't know. My understanding from the legislation is that we can find that shortfall, which is about half of the tax on average, still in the commercial sector if we are short. I'm not going to load it on to the residential sector. It's already overburdened, little houses — we're getting into the market value assessment. We haven't calculated those in.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Walker, for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee this evening.

1800

BETSY TRUMPENER

The Chair: Would Betsy Trumpener please come forward. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Ms Betsy Trumpener: Good afternoon. I apologize for not having a written brief to offer you tonight. I brought my brief with me in a bag and I'm going to speak pretty directly from my heart. I'm speaking to you against Bill 103 as someone who has been a resident and chosen to live in Toronto for over a decade.

I want to talk about some of my neighbours who are maybe getting forgotten. I want to talk about people who are living outside places I've lived who are homeless; I want to talk about adult education, particularly for people who haven't had a chance to get an education; and I want to talk about joy, which I think is a really important part of living in Toronto.

I speak against Bill 103 with a very strong feeling that it's local solutions that are usually the most innovative and most appropriate, and local solutions that are supported with money from all the citizens, of course.

The first thing I want to talk about is —

The Chair: I have to tell you that we're not supposed to have props or signs and so on and so forth at these hearings.

Ms Trumpener: I won't be throwing them. It's only a sleeping bag.

The Chair: It's still a prop or a sign, ma'am. I'm bound by the rules of the Legislature. Maybe the fact that you've said you've got a sleeping bag in there will have to suffice.

Ms Trumpener: Okay, exhibit A: sleeping bag. I want to talk about people who are homeless. Until recently I lived just behind the Art Gallery of Ontario and there were a lot of homeless people living in the park behind me. It's something that we see a lot on the streets and it continues to increase. In a lot of ways it has become downtown Toronto's problem, although homeless people I've talked to come from all over the province.

These are people who are coming to Toronto with the hope of work and the hope of getting housing. They want to work and they want to have housing. So I'm really concerned about the implications of this bill on the ability to build housing that's going to be cheap enough for people to live in and in terms of welfare payments and the cuts to welfare payments and how those issues hit people in Toronto the hardest.

Prop B, which I'm not allowed to pull out, is a book.

Mr Sergio: Pull it out.

Ms Trumpener: Pull it out?

The Chair: No, don't pull it out, Ms Trumpener, because I'll just recess and you won't be able to finish.

Ms Trumpener: I wanted to pull out a book to recognize that just as the city of Toronto has developed some very innovative and appropriate responses to homelessness, something which might get lost in the megacity, so too the Toronto school board and the Toronto public libraries have developed a lot of really innovative local

solutions to issues like adult illiteracy. For those people who would talk about global competition and economic competitiveness, the literacy rate of the citizens of your city is a very important issue.

The last thing I wanted to talk about was joy. This prop I really would love to pull out. Oh, come on.

The Chair: If you pull out a prop, I'll have to recess and your whole time would be off the record. I'm sorry.

Ms Trumpener: You will have to recess? Okay.

Mr Sergio: We want to see it.

The Chair: That's bad advice from Mr Sergio.

Ms Trumpener: My last prop is a skate.

Mr Sergio: It's her 10 minutes.

The Chair: You know the rules of the Legislature, Mr Sergio. She's going to lose her time if she follows your advice.

Ms Trumpener: I have a skate here. Here is my skate. You can see it peeking out of my bag. To me the skate represents one of the joys of living in the city: having free recreational activities which are enjoyed by everyone. I see it as like my freedom to trip over the skates of other people who are my neighbours and live in other parts of Toronto; our right to enjoy hot chocolate together outside city hall after we've done our free skating. I want us to remember our neighbours who are least fortunate and who will get lost in the shuffle in the megacity. I want us to also think about the joy, of the opportunities of things that we have to do together with all our neighbours. Thank you.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Thank you for your presentation, for coming forward. It's unfortunate that the Chair has ruled that your props can't be used as evidence here. In any event, do you see any good coming out of Bill 103 for the city?

Interjection.

Ms Trumpener: I'm sorry, whose question? I'm confused about which question to answer.

The Chair: Can I have order on both sides of the table, please? Mr Wood has the floor.

Mr Len Wood: I'm used to having people interrupt on committees of this kind, but I hope that the Chair will bring them under control. Do you see any good for the city coming out of Bill 103?

Ms Trumpener: No.

Mr Len Wood: Communities outside of Toronto, outside of the seven cities they're talking about, are being given a choice to sit down and talk with their neighbours. Why do you think that this is not the case for these seven cities that they want to combine into one?

Ms Trumpener: The only thing I can think of is a fear of what people working together can come up with, which is usually something pretty powerful.

Ms Churley: Can I just ask you, since you can't display your props, what you've got in there and what exactly you were going to prove?

Ms Trumpener: The first thing I have is a sleeping bag, which I see a number of my neighbours sleeping under on grates around the city. They're people who come from all over the province but end up being, in terms of cost, something that gets put on to the city of Toronto. I also have a book, which represents to me literacy and the joys of reading and education, something

which is represented by the Toronto public libraries and the Toronto Board of Education. I have a figure-skate, which to me represents the joy of using some of our city's services, like the free skating rinks.

Mr Len Wood: I would just like to say that this is my first entrance into this committee, although this is normally my regular committee that I sit on. I'd like to say that you should be proud, as I am and other members of this committee, that an audience is here to fill up the room to listen to your presentation. It's something that I'm proud of and I'm sure you are and the other audience that is here to listen to the presentation. Once again, thank you very much for coming forward. We appreciate it.

Ms Trumpener: Those of us who believe in democracy and people power, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Trumpener. The committee is recessed until 7 pm this evening.

The committee recessed from 1807 to 1901.

DONNA HARDAKER

The Chair: Welcome to the evening session of the standing committee on general government. Donna Hardaker is before us. You have 10 minutes this evening to make your presentation. You may use that time as you see fit. If at the end of your presentation there's some time left over, I hope you'll stay and maybe receive some questions from the government caucus.

Ms Donna Hardaker: When I started to prepare this deposition, at first I considered asking the members of the panel and everyone else listening to excuse the obvious tremor in my voice. I am very nervous. I have never spoken to a legislative committee before. Indeed, I have never become involved in politics in any overt way beyond casting my ballot.

Instead, I am going to ask you to hear that tremor, to hear that someone like me, with no political savvy and a deathly fear of speaking in public, has come here tonight to speak to you from the heart. I have no political agenda. I hold no political loyalties. I am a citizen of East York, of Metro Toronto, and I am here because I thought I lived in a democracy and because I like the way my local representation works.

When I received in my door this pamphlet from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing entitled *One Toronto for All of Us*, I read it and I was very angry with myself for not having paid attention to the planning of the megacity, because even from my relatively uninformed position I had many questions and concerns after reading this brochure.

When I found out that these plans were made without public consultation and that Bill 103 had not passed into law, that what I read in here was in terms of Parliament hypothetical but in terms of Al Leach a fait accompli, I got angry and I turned into a political animal. I lost trust in this government's ability to respect our democratic system, to respect my democratic rights and those of the more than two million people who will be directly affected by this bill.

How could I assure my children, who are seated in the audience here tonight, that the democratic process of consultation is alive and well in Ontario? I thought

democracy meant that the government was accountable to all the people. I remember learning this in grade school. Even with majority rule, a democratically elected government is obligated to consider the needs of, and to consult with, all the citizens, not just those who voted them in.

A referendum is one way for the people to be consulted. In the government's discussion paper, *Your Ontario, Your Choice*, I learned that this government does believe in the referendum process and would like to see it implemented in Ontario. However, it will not be in place before Bill 103 is passed. Is this at all expedient on the part of the government? If this government stands by its own words, then surely direct public consultation, not just these committee hearings, is absolutely warranted.

I have concerns that the citizens of Toronto are being treated differently than citizens in other areas of Ontario. In the government's pamphlet I learned about the Savings and Restructuring Act of 1996, in which the government gave authority to municipalities in northern Ontario, counties and cities, to decide how they are structured, their boundaries and how many levels of government they need. Why has the government given this authority to decide on restructuring to only certain areas in Ontario? Why are we in Toronto being denied this decision-making process?

I wonder too about the role of these hearings. These are supposed to be another way for the voice of the people to be heard. For normal legislation this would be sufficient, but Bill 103 is not normal legislation. The amalgamation of Toronto is of such great importance that in the past governments have established royal commissions to look at the concerns of restructuring this city.

Indeed, the Conservative governments of both Premier John Robarts and Premier William Davis established royal commissions to examine the concerns of Metro. These royal commissions ensured no one felt deprived of his or her day in court. But this current government is acting as if this is a done deal and has made it clear they will not alter their amalgamation plans regardless of what is said at these hearings.

These plans to dismantle Metro Toronto were made behind closed doors. Does the government expect me to trust in the process when it abuses it so flagrantly? Am I wasting my time by speaking today when the government is committed to not listening? Are you, the committee members, wasting your time?

I would like to be assured that the government respects this process and will listen to all the concerns presented here and will accept that if the voice of the people, such as it can be heard at these hearings, is strongly against this bill, it will delay its passage and will consider withdrawing it.

From my understanding of democracy, political appointments are kept to a minimum and are only used when elections would be inappropriate. I have grave concerns that the three appointed trustees and the appointed transition team, who are not elected and are not in any way accountable to the people, have and will have sweeping powers to make decisions that cannot be changed after their job is finished, even in court. This authority, without accountability, is not democracy as I have learned it.

I have heard that the present municipalities were put into trusteeship to prevent the outgoing councils from making wild expenditures on their way out. The government has made it clear that they do not trust my democratically elected municipal representatives, but I am supposed to trust their appointees who will never have to justify their decisions. This is not democracy.

From my understanding, a mandate is created by the promises and plans made during an election campaign. Nowhere did the Conservative Party state an amalgamated Toronto was in its plans. In a 1995 debate, Mike Harris said he supported the idea of eliminating the Metro level of governance and preferred, "the level of government closest to the people." I don't understand how this became a mandate for a megacity. A government acting without a mandate from the people is not democracy.

I am aware of the mandate to cut the deficit, cut spending, cut taxes. The government has declared that the megacity will save Torontonians money. However, as I consult the list on the back page of Al Leach's flyer, I find that not one of these studies or reports supports Bill 103's type of reform. The financial figures published by all sides and readjusted day after day of mega-week changes do not ensure a tax saving. No report that has been released to the public can say with certainty that after the mega-changes have been put into effect, there will be savings, yet the government has said there will be. On what basis does it make this claim?

I cannot help but feel that the people of Toronto are being deceived and swindled. From my understanding, there are no provisions in Bill 103 to ensure that our municipal reserves, totalling over \$1 billion, will stay in our communities after amalgamation. Does the government perhaps have plans for this money that their appointees will carry out?

Finally, I want to speak about my city. I have lived in Toronto practically all my life, with just a year or two in other cities in Canada and one year in Europe. I have lived, worked and volunteered in many parts of Toronto. I have always been proud and grateful that the downtown core in my city is vibrant and safe. I fear that Toronto will become like Chicago, Los Angeles or New York where the needs of the downtown are neglected because decisions are made centrally by a huge governing body when the vastly different areas like Scarborough and Parkdale will have to compete with one another for a piece of pie.

I do not appreciate the pat on the head on page 2 of Al Leach's brochure telling me that I "will notice little change in a megacity. The services you rely on — garbage collection, libraries, fire protection, parks programs — will continue to be delivered."

Maybe the minister doesn't know that they are delivered quite differently across Metro, depending on the needs and desires of the community. I most certainly will notice changes, one of which is that as a resident of East York, I enjoy my right to get through to my mayor easily. Will the mayor of 2.3 million people welcome me into his or her office to hear about my concerns? Of course not.

1910

I will be expected to voice my concerns to the appointed neighbourhood committees, who will then advise

the community councils, who will then advise the elected megacity representatives. There are so many pitfalls here. Lots of advisers with no decision-making power, and again, appointees at what is supposed to my local level of government. How is this less government? How is this convoluted system supposed to be my local government?

Let me say also that I object to the contempt shown to me and all other citizens of Ontario with this government's decision to have a mega-week. The government seems to be hoping that people like me will be so overwhelmed by day after day of sweeping changes that we will sit back in stunned silence and just let the steamroller continue on its heavy-handed path.

This government must slow down the pace at which these enormous changes are being made, stop the posturing on all sides of the debate and find out what is best for the people of Toronto by listening to the people of Toronto. We need a royal commission to do this properly.

Last November 11, I stood with my younger son at the Remembrance Day services at the East York Civic Centre. We watched the veterans march past and we listened to speeches about young men and women who gave their lives fighting for democracy. At the time I was more concerned about the cold and getting home for lunch than I was about democracy, but shortly after Remembrance Day I became aware that my democratic rights to meaningful consultation and meaningful local representation were being severely compromised by Mike Harris and the government of Ontario.

Bill 103 has forever removed my complacency. I will never again assume and I will never again allow my children to assume that our democratic rights are safe simply because we live in Canada.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Ms Hardaker. Nary a waiver and you used up the 10 minutes and a little bit more. Thank you for coming and making your presentation this evening.

SHEILA KIERAN

The Chair: Would Sheila Kieran please come forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know some of you have been here in the afternoon and the morning and some even on Monday, and I know that the clerk has spoken to some of you as you came in. The audience in a committee room is the same as the audience in the chamber and my job and my role as the Chairman is to keep a level of decorum and a level of order, so I'd appreciate it if you'd refrain as much as possible from any outbursts.

The place for people to speak and be heard is in the chair and I think many people here tonight have made their presentations. We have a limited amount of time and I want to make sure everyone gets their 10 minutes. If we could refrain from that, I'd appreciate it.

You have 10 minutes to make your presentation and if there's any time left, it'll be the government caucus to ask questions.

Ms Sheila Kieran: I want to first of all thank the committee for responding to my request to appear in front of you.

First, I'd like to give you something of an introduction. I'm that increasingly rare person, the native Torontonian.

In fact, I was the first baby born in what used to be known as the private patients' pavilion of the Toronto General Hospital in a very long-ago year, though perhaps not as long ago as my grandchildren think.

Like most people, I've always felt great attachment to Toronto, but unlike most I have always been active in civic affairs. That means that, among other things, I'm a veteran of the fights to save the old city hall and to stop the Spadina.

Unlike some of the people I know you've heard from, I'm not reflexively against the idea of reshaping the government of the six cities. I've been around long enough to remember the late Carl Goldenberg's 1966 recommendation that the then 13 municipalities be replaced by four. I even remember, provincial politics being what they were at the time, that it was deemed wiser to permit York and East York to keep their separate identities, which gave us the six cities we now have at issue.

I recall the 1969 referendum in which the people of the city of Toronto supported amalgamation and only the provincial government said no. I remember a succession of mayors, including Allan Lamport, Nathan Phillips, Donny Summerville, and of course David Crombie, who over time have supported it.

I suspect I'm not alone when I say that I would be very interested to be part of a democratic process of consultation and openness that might indeed lead to amalgamation, but it would not, I want to assure the members here, be anything like the pretence of democracy of which this committee and what we're doing is a part, given the minister's announcement that he will virtually ignore your recommendations.

I believe the current government has been provocative and insulting at the very time when cooperation and openness are greatly needed. The attitudes and manners of the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, I'm afraid to say, have been particularly unhelpful. By "manners" I don't mean simple courtesy or civility, though it is sad these are so noticeably lacking. What I mean can be found in the words of the great 19th-century Canadian humorist Thomas Haliburton, who said, "To whom much is given, much is expected." Exactly so.

Mr Leach has been given a great deal of power, trust and responsibility. With those went great expectations that he would facilitate needed change, not smack people in the face with it and then boast about his ability to do so. The appointment of the trustees was insulting and deliberately provocative, particularly because Mr Leach, the provincial government and the trustees themselves are aware that any action on their part will bring down the force and majesty of constitutional and charter law.

Despite Mr Leach and Mr Harris's assurances that they will not pay any attention to suggestions brought before you, I would like to offer some ideas on what should be done now.

First the legislation should be taken off the fast track. No one, certainly not Mr Leach or the Premier, has suggested why amalgamation has to take place this year. It is not enough to repeat some mantra about savings which has been discredited in the eyes of anyone who has read even a summary of the various reports, including that by KPMG.

Second, with the legislation delayed, the minister and the Premier should sit down with their best advisers and start thinking about how they might best sell their ideas about amalgamation to the community. Clearly the most effective method would be to undertake a true process of consultation.

There's nothing wrong with having a goal, as the government surely does, but it would have to see amalgamation as a process, which it is, not as an event to be rammed down people's throats. Certainly no one is entitled to feel either so knowledgeable or so arrogant that they are qualified to dismiss out of hand any statement, for example of Jane Jacobs, about appointed neighbourhood citizens' bodies.

Success would be possible only if the government had a genuinely open mind on the "how," even if it doesn't have on the "what." Yes, you'll get amalgamation, but you can get it without the freight of bitterness and disillusionment the government is now buying for itself.

Third, that process should start by turning down the rhetoric on both sides and beginning at the top. The minister and the Premier have to keep from acting as if municipal public servants were petty thieves bent on destroying the community. This is particularly ill suited to the minister, who after all was publicly employed for a good number of years. I would also deeply appreciate it if the powers that be here at Queen's Park would stop insulting my councillors.

It is graceless and not very useful to suggest that the people in these precincts are the font of all wisdom while the folks further down University Avenue are a bunch of lazy louts just trying to save their own skins.

Finally, I do not favour referenda as a way of reaching decisions. The legislation making more of them possible is, in my view, a totally unnecessary and potentially dangerous idea borrowed in haste from the United States right wing. Outcomes of referenda can easily be influenced by lobbying and corrupt financial practices. I support the current municipal referenda plans only because the government has closed off every other meaningful avenue of public input. This is just another example of how it has been its own worst enemy.

Maybe amalgamation is the devil's own work, maybe it is a brilliant idea whose time has come, but we're not about to find out. Rather, we're going to be left with a very real sense of bitterness and isolation, I must say with good reason, with people who feel they've been cheated and pushed around.

Winston Churchill once said that democracy was the worst possible form of government except for all the others. I would urge this government to recognize Winston Churchill's wisdom now, before it's too late to recognize it and act on it. Thank you.

I'd be happy to answer questions.

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Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you very much, Ms Kieran, for the presentation.

On the issue of referenda, you mentioned that you don't have great faith in the ability of the referendum to actually answer the questions that would be asked.

Ms Kieran: No, that isn't what I said.

Mr Hardeman: Okay. Maybe I should rephrase it.

Ms Kieran: I said I don't like referendums.

Mr Hardeman: You don't support the principle of referendums.

Ms Kieran: Right.

Mr Hardeman: Of course that would be based on the fact that they are not as representative of the public's opinion as they might be.

Ms Kieran: No, that isn't what I said. I said they are very open to corrupt practices.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you. You explained it far better than I could. I guess the question really would be, would it be appropriate — as you mentioned, you see this as the only alternative to the present situation, but do you feel that the results of a referendum are the results that one should then accept as the people's wishes, recognizing the concern you have with the validity of it?

Ms Kieran: I think you're going to have to accept these simply because the government has cut off any other avenue of very broad discussion and input. It's not ideal, but it's all we've been left with.

Mr Hardeman: The other issue I think you spoke to is the trustees and the need for trustees. Leaving out the fact that we disagree on the need to go through this process, do you have any suggestions on how one would deal with the suggestions that have been put out that if it wasn't for the trustees, local government would do some strange things with the assets of the public?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): You should know better.

Mr Hardeman: These are not my ideas; these were suggestions brought forward at local council meetings.

Ms Kieran: I'm sorry, I didn't get your name.

Mr Hardeman: I'm sorry. I'm Ernie Hardeman. I'm parliamentary assistant to the minister.

Ms Kieran: I see. Are you suggesting then that I can't trust you and the minister? That certainly sounds not unreasonable. Should I have trustees appointed to look over you? Maybe the federal government should do that.

Mr Hardeman: I just read it in the paper, I wasn't at the council meeting, but there was an article in the paper that suggested one of the city councils had suggested they should look at ways to put the title of city hall in a non-profit corporation so a new entity would not become beneficiary to that asset.

Ms Kieran: I'm sorry. I don't know which paper; I didn't see the article and I would reject it. After all, presumably when the people in your riding elected you, they trusted you to behave honourably. I feel the same way about the people who represent me here and at city hall.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation this evening.

COLIN HINZ

The Chair: Would Colin Hinz please come forward. Good evening and welcome to the committee.

Mr Colin Hinz: Good evening, Mr Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. My name is Colin Hinz. I speak to you tonight as a city of Toronto resident and also as a professional engineer.

Engineers are by nature problem solvers, and thus I have chosen to contemplate Bill 103, the so-called City of Toronto Act, from a problem-solving perspective.

The problem-solving process can be summarized as follows: identifying the problem, formulating a suitable solution, implementing the solution and verifying the results. If there are unanticipated problems or inadequate results, the process must be repeated.

The minister and his staff, under the guidance of the Who Does What panel, have been correct to identify that there are some problems with the current governance of the Metro Toronto region and the GTA. The ministry has also managed a credible attempt to identify what those problems are. Certainly its analyses are incomplete, but they are a worthy first attempt. Where it needs help, however, is with the remainder of the problem-solving process.

First off, an aphorism: "There is never enough time to do it right, but there is always enough time to do it over." This appears to be the approach favoured by Mr Leach. In a mere 11 days from receiving the recommendations from the Who Does What committee, he has managed to table a comprehensive piece of legislation. I can't conceive of how the minister, with the aid of his staff, could do this in a manner which considered all reasonable alternatives and which took into account the impacts of the legislation, not in that kind of time frame.

I note with dismay also that the minister is attempting to solve several large problems at the same time, all of them with sweeping changes. How can he expect to study the effects of these changes and make course corrections where necessary? Quite simply, he cannot. The resultant turmoil will be solvable only through — you guessed it — damage control and crisis management. This appears to be the only management style the minister is comfortable with.

Now another aphorism: "Haste makes waste." I am appalled that the ministry is attempting to bring forth such sweeping change in a year's time frame. Certainly, the region will benefit if Mr Leach acts promptly on solutions instead of letting yet another study gather dust, as his predecessors did. However, this promptness must be reasonable. The creation of Metro Toronto is cited by the minister as an example and role model for Bill 103. What is forgotten is that the enabling legislation was drafted only after three years of hearings and consultation. The honourable minister needs to be reminded that caution is a virtue here and that the economic and social consequences of a misstep could be dire.

The transition costs presented in the mayors' report have been compared to those in the KPMG study, and the upper figure given by the mayors is a full \$100 million less than KPMG's. Is it entirely a coincidence that the mayors are allowing a four-year transition period, in contrast with Mr Leach's single year? I think not.

On the verification of results: A fair and reasonable transition process should include feedback paths both from the citizens and from the municipal bureaucracies. This feedback is necessary to correct the problems that will arise from the transitional activities.

The minister promises us that the new Toronto will be as responsive and accountable, or even more so, to its

citizens. Why then is the transition process so cloaked in secrecy? Why are its operations so much at variance with normal due process and accountability? This is hardly an auspicious way of introducing something that's supposed to be good for all of us.

There is also a curious lack of confidence shown in the transition process. How else to explain the bulwark of extraordinary protection provided to the trustees and to the transition team? It appears that the minister is so unconfident that the decisions of these teams will pass public and legal scrutiny that he has constructed an impenetrable fortress of secrecy and immunity around them.

In recommendation, I am calling upon the committee to take the following actions:

(1) To insist that the minister demonstrate that the amalgamation proposal is the most effective means of solving the problems already identified, while minimizing negative impacts. So far its chief evidence consists of the KPMG report, which by its own admission is limited in scope and thoroughness. Mandates for large, sweeping changes require a strong burden of proof. The minister will have to do better.

(2) To insist that the revised legislation allow a sufficient transition period to ensure orderly and coherent change. This includes the settling of labour issues, winding up of surplus assets, consolidation of information services and harmonization of service levels and bylaws.

(3) To insist that the transition process be an open and accountable one. It must not engender suspicion or bewilderment in the affected citizens or in the affected governments.

(4) To recognize that if municipal referenda endorse amalgamation, this is support for the end result and not the proposed process. Concern for fairness and equitability of any restructuring process must be paramount.

(5) Last, in the event that Bill 103, as it stands, is passed into law, I urge the six existing municipal councils to immediately declare a state of emergency to end on December 31, 1997. This state of emergency would free councils from the obligations imposed under subsection 10(1) of the act and would be morally justifiable, considering that they are all victims of what in essence constitutes a hostile takeover action. A municipal state of emergency would also suit the management-by-crisis style that the provincial government favours so well.

Mr Gerretsen: Sir, both in your presentation and in the two preceding presentations there was quite a bit of comment made about the haste with which this legislation is being brought forward. I think you probably realize, which the government is not telling you, that this bill is very closely tied in to the megadumping bills of health care and social welfare costs etc. We all know that the city of Toronto has a larger aging population than some of the other cities around, and a greater need for some of the health care and social services. Quite frankly, in order to pay for those costs, they've drawn in the other cities in order to make them pay for them as well. That's really what it all boils down to. The two actions are very closely related. You won't get any admission from them on that, but I can tell you that's the reason they are in such haste to do this.

1930

Mr Hinz: I'm quite aware of that. I just chose not to focus on the broader issues, but rather to address specifically Bill 103.

Mr Colle: I have another question. The government is always making the comparison saying: "This is no different than when Metro was created back in 1953-54. The process is no different. What are you worried about?" I think you've made a very excellent point. You've researched that and I think you're putting it on the record that it was much different. In that process, there was consultation that extended over three years. There was consensus, there was dialogue, and nobody in Metro felt that it was shoved down their throats without due process. Do you want to comment on what you found in your research, a comparison of 1954 to today?

Mr Hinz: My primary source of information was the biography of Fred Gardiner, written by Timothy Colton, called Big Daddy. It's a fairly comprehensive book.

I would like to mention also that the incoming Metro council stepped into office in April 1953, whereas the existing municipal councils served in office until the close of 1953. So there was an overlap period, and that overlap period was constituted by democratically elected councils, which is not the situation that we have under Bill 103.

Mr Colle: An excellent point.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Hinz, for coming forward tonight to make your presentation.

FIONA CHARLES

The Chair: Would Fiona Charles please come forward. Good evening, Ms Charles. You have 10 minutes this evening to make your presentation.

Ms Fiona Charles: My name is Fiona Charles and I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity to make this presentation this evening.

I'm sure that in the course of these public hearings you will hear many arguments for and against amalgamation. I have come here this evening to talk about the astonishingly undemocratic — indeed anti-democratic — nature of Bill 103.

First there is the government's refusal to hold a binding referendum on the question of amalgamation. With a referendum, all sides would have the opportunity to campaign on the strength of their arguments. This would mean public debate on all the issues and an airing of all the alternatives, followed by a democratic vote by the people most affected. Instead, with this bill, the decision is imposed and the only public consultation is sought after the legislation is tabled. The government has made it very clear that it is not interested in the electorate's wishes as they would be expressed in a referendum.

Second, this bill proposes the drastic reduction of local representation. The ratio of 44 municipal councillors to 2.5 million citizens will mean that each representative will represent 56,000 people. This is a dramatic reduction in the accountability of local government, replacing what are now, by and large, accessible, human-scale city governments with one that is remote and inaccessible.

Finally, and most disturbingly, Bill 103 imposes a profoundly autocratic decision-making process. This

process begins immediately with appointed trustees having power to overrule the spending decisions of duly elected municipal governments, the people we elected to spend our property tax money. This in itself is a mockery of the democratic process.

Following amalgamation, decisions will be made by an appointed transition team with sweeping powers. This team will be accountable only to the minister, not to the new municipal council we will elect or even to the Legislature. It will have the power to make staffing appointments and sign contracts; in effect, to govern the new municipality in every way that counts.

Bill 103 then tries to raise the decisions of these appointees above the rule of law. They can't be overturned by our elected council and they will not be subject to challenge in the courts. Quite simply, this is government by fiat.

By vesting irrevocable decision-making powers in appointed officials responsible only to the minister, the provincial government is suspending local government. Effectively, Bill 103 suspends local democracy in Metropolitan Toronto indefinitely. The province has the power to do this, we know, because of a Constitution that became law 130 years ago. Yet this is a power that has rarely, if ever, been exercised. Like the power of the Lieutenant Governor to call an election over the objections of the elected provincial government, it is a power that runs contrary to the democratic spirit and practice of the last half of the 20th century. It is a power that should not be exercised.

I've heard the argument that this bill cannot be anti-democratic because it has been tabled by a democratically elected provincial government. Supposedly, because the trustees and transition team will be accountable to this same democratically elected government, their decisions will therefore be democratic by definition.

It doesn't take very much knowledge of 20th century history to know what a fallacy that is. There are many examples of democratically elected governments that have acted undemocratically. Without resorting to rhetoric, and to take an extreme example, we should remember that Hitler first came to power in a democratic election. The transition of German government during the Third Reich from democracy to dictatorship was made entirely within the legislative process, with the gradual passage of one law after another destroying democratic rights until all were gone.

The usual excuse for government by fiat is a state of emergency, "apprehended insurrection," war. But there is no war or emergency in Metropolitan Toronto. There isn't even a financial emergency. The cities are not bankrupt or even in debt. They aren't allowed to have deficit budgets by law.

It is undoubtedly true that municipal government could be more efficient. Doubtless, with greater cooperation between cities, we could achieve cost savings through economies of scale. The citizens of Toronto might decide, after hearing all the arguments and considering all the alternatives, that amalgamation is the right way to go. But it is our decision to make. It is not a decision that should be rushed or imposed on us.

Democracy is a messy business. It is not always the most efficient or cost-effective way of making decisions or of governing, but it is the best system we have and it is easily imperiled. In a democratic society, every piece of proposed legislation must be rigorously examined to see if it threatens democracy. In a democratic society, the end does not justify the means. Bill 103 is a bad piece of legislation. Bill 103 imposes undemocratic means to achieve its ends.

Mr Len Wood: Thank you very much for your presentation. I just want to go back: You're saying the powers that the trustees have, they're appointed trustees and they've taken over the whole democratic process that was there before, where the mayors were elected and the councillors were elected. Now, for no apparent reason, there are appointments of three trustees.

Maybe you could expand a little bit on what kind of a democratic system you think should be in place now as we're proceeding with Bill 103.

Ms Charles: Unfortunately, I'm not sure there can be a democratic process, because we are proceeding with Bill 103. The democratic process would have been to initiate public consultation as part of the decision-making process leading up to drafting legislation. That hasn't happened.

Mr Len Wood: As you pointed out in your presentation, there are all kinds of reasons why people are going to be rising up against Bill 103, and you've brought more reasons forward. Since the hearings have started, there's always a large audience in the room, people anxious to make presentations and saying: "Why is Mike Harris doing this? He's allowing democracy to take place outside of these seven local governments." In the 905 region and northern Ontario he is saying, "You people can get down and talk it over and come up with some kind of an agreement." Why do you think he would be doing this to the people of what he considers the new Toronto? Why would Mike Harris and Al Leach be treating them in a different fashion than everybody else?

Ms Charles: I don't understand that at all. I have heard suggestions that perhaps Harris wants to punish Toronto because that's not where his support comes from. I don't believe that a democratically elected government would behave in that way, but it's a mystery to me. Perhaps it's also a distrust of the electorate, that we're not trusted to be smart enough to make decisions about our future.

1940

Mr Len Wood: You might be right on that because I know that he is punishing northern Ontario severely in all the dumping that he is doing and the cutbacks and the money he's taken out of it. Maybe that is what is happening. Maybe that's why Mike Harris and Al Leach — maybe they are punishing Toronto for not supporting them in the last election.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): The northern Ontario heritage fund.

Mr Len Wood: The heritage fund has given nothing whatsoever. There hasn't been a single penny in the last two years given out of the heritage fund. It's a big joke. Chris Hodgson and Mike Harris —

The Chair: Mr Wood.

Mr Newman: Sixty-five million —

Mr Len Wood: Control your members, there. They've been yapping away like little dogs.

The Chair: Mr Wood, you have the floor.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Just ignore him.

The Chair: Order, Mrs Marland.

Mr Len Wood: Now we've got Margaret starting to yap away.

This is what is happening on a daily basis in the Legislature. You have 82 members of the Conservative caucus that are ramming everything through. They don't care about democracy in Ontario. We've seen what has been happening over the last 18 months. We see the example here again tonight where people like yourself come in and make presentations and we hear the Conservative caucus making fun of their presentations. I think it's wrong, deadly wrong, and —

Mrs Marland: No, we weren't.

The Chair: Please, Mrs Marland, you're out of order. Mr Wood has the floor. Mr Wood, you have about a minute left if you want to ask another question of Ms Charles.

Mr Len Wood: I would just like to say that I appreciate very much your coming forward and making a presentation and having the nerve to do that. I know the presentations are going to continue until this bill is withdrawn, because it won't work. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Charles.

BOB OLSEN

The Chair: Would Bob Olsen please come forward. Good evening, Mr Olsen, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Bob Olsen: Thank you. My name is Bob Olsen. I have been a citizen of Metropolitan Toronto since 1948. I am concerned about the growing numbers of homeless people in Toronto. My concern has led me to serve on the board of directors of the Open Door Centre, a drop-in program serving the homeless for 27 years. The Open Door Centre is one of the member agencies in the Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness.

I've come to explain why it is important to the homeless people to preserve local democracy and not amalgamate the municipalities of Toronto. The city of Toronto is the only Metro municipality trying to provide housing or health care for the destitute and the homeless. The city of Toronto does things differently than the cities of Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough.

The city of Toronto has been one of the world leaders in the field of public health for 100 years. The city of Toronto has been one of the leaders, if not the leader, in North America in the field of affordable housing for more than 50 years. People come from all over the world to see how Toronto's housing policy works. The city of Toronto is the only municipality in Metro that has a housing department, the only municipality in Metro that has a housing corporation.

The city of Toronto is one of the two or three jurisdictions in Canada that license rooming-houses. Until recently, the other Metro municipalities did not even allow rooming-houses, let alone license them. For

example, North York had a bylaw that defined who could be a family — can you imagine? I've got a copy of it with me — and thus limited who could live in a house. They had a bylaw as to who could live in a house, thus prohibiting rooming-houses and shared accommodation in North York, the only type of housing that the poor can afford, thus discouraging low-income people from living in North York.

The city of Toronto is one of the few municipalities in Ontario that permitted basement apartments. Scarborough and Mississauga both fought tooth and nail against legalizing basement apartments. Basement apartments are the refuge of sole-support mothers.

The city of Toronto was the first municipality in Canada, and the only municipality in Metro, to set up a municipal housing corporation. Regent Park, built by the city in the 1940s, became the basis of the Ontario Housing Corp, which now has 85,000 housing units in communities across Ontario and is likely to be sold.

Cityhome, the city of Toronto non-profit housing corporation, was set up 22 years ago under Mayor David Crombie, and became the model for other municipal non-profit corporations. None of the other Metro municipalities have even considered setting up a municipal non-profit housing corporation. The city of Toronto, through its housing department, has been proactive in providing affordable housing. Other municipalities have used parking regulations to prevent the construction of affordable housing.

Where other municipalities are neutral or obstruct affordable or social housing, the city of Toronto housing department staff have facilitated and promoted both social and for-profit affordable housing for at least 50 years.

How do we explain the city's concern with public health? How do we explain the city's concern with affordable housing? Is there something different or strange about city of Toronto politicians? Were mayors Crombie, Sewell and Eggleton smoking funny cigarettes? Or is it that Toronto's political differences are due to a difference in community?

Do different communities identify their own specific problems? Do they find solutions to common problems that are specific to their community? Do they elect the politicians who are able to implement the solutions the community needs? Do the elected politicians and the solutions they implement reflect the communities they serve?

Housing and health care services for the homeless are priorities for the city of Toronto. I have had the opportunity to work with both public health and city housing officials for some years on these issues. These issues are not a priority for Etobicoke, North York or Scarborough. They are not even on the agenda.

A suburban solution to the problems of housing the poor is to deny or discourage them access to housing in their communities. That option has not been available to downtown Toronto politicians because the poor have nowhere else to go. You can't get rid of them. You can't drive them out of downtown Toronto. And so for 100 years the city of Toronto has been the leader in providing health care and affordable housing to the poor.

The poor and the destitute and the homeless will suffer the most from this amalgamation.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr Olsen. I want to commend you first of all on your work in the housing industry or housing for the poor in Toronto.

The question comes as to why we have the concern that in making the city larger, the needs of the people within that city will not be looked after in the same manner. Would you see all of a sudden electing different people or seeing different needs in a community that is larger?

Mr Olsen: We have a good example in the difference of the response between the city of Toronto and Metro Toronto. We already have a Metro structure which covers the whole area now. Being on the board of directors of two local agencies, we have better access to city of Toronto officials — I'm talking about bureaucrats — we have better access to elected officials, and we get a much quicker response, whereas going to Metro, they have defined programs and it takes years to change a program.

If you say you've got a problem, they have to set up an entire program to address a very specific problem. We can go to the city of Toronto and say, "We need a new kitchen because we've got to cook for several hundred homeless people a day." The city of Toronto will find a way. They'll say yes; they'll make the money available. But to go to Metro, they would have to set up an entire program to provide kitchens to all the services across Metro. It just doesn't work.

Mr Hardeman: Is that because the Metro level is a different type of government?

Mr Olsen: It's just bigger.

Mr Hardeman: Because it's bigger.

Mr Olsen: It's bigger. A smaller person than I am can move much quicker than I. I'm six foot three and I'm a bit cumbersome. Someone who's five feet tall and weighs 100 pounds is much more nimble on their feet and they can move around more quickly. They can manoeuvre on the icy streets; I can't. It's more difficult for me. I'm just too big.

1950

Mrs Marland: I think some of the points Mr Olsen is making are very valid. I think his arguments, particularly for the homeless and particularly for those people that are not able to find affordable housing, are very real concerns and they are concerns our government is facing. They are concerns we had when we were in the opposition and they are concerns we share with you today and we want to address.

I'm wondering actually, although I can't ask Mario Sergio, how he feels about the criticism of North York, because I feel that Mel Lastman is a mayor and his council are members who also share the same concerns for people who have those particularly unbelievably difficult challenges in their lives on a daily basis.

Mr Sergio: I'd be pleased to answer that.

Mrs Marland: Personally, I appreciate the points you have made by bringing these in your brief to us tonight. They are not areas that are being ignored. The tragedy of people dying on our streets has been a tragedy not only in the last year or the last 10 years; it is something that every government and every municipality is trying to cope with on a daily basis, and it's a responsibility frankly that all of us share.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Olsen, for coming forward and making your presentation this evening.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order —

The Chair: Bruce Bonaney, please come forward.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: We don't want to have — the two can have a conversation about that —

Mr Gerretsen: No, I just want to make a point of order.

The Chair: Mr Sergio, if you're in a position to ask some questions of the next person, if you want to respond in any way to that —

Mr Gerretsen: I've got a point of order.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr Gerretsen: The point of order is that these gentlemen are saying that you've just got many more of these people in the city of Toronto so that there's a much greater need to look after them —

The Chair: You know it's not a point of order, Mr Gerretsen.

BRUCE BONANEY

The Chair: Mr Bonaney, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation. At the end of the presentation, if there is time left over, that would go to the Liberal caucus to ask questions.

Mr Bruce Bonaney: Dear members of the committee, it is a profound level of disgust that brings me here before you tonight. I live and work on Yonge Street just north of Lawrence Avenue here in Toronto and am pleased to say that I am very happy with our community. It is an area where I feel very comfortable with my neighbours, don't have to worry about walking around at night and enjoy frequenting the local businesses of which I am a part. I do not want this to change for the worse.

For the past 20 years or so I have been rather apolitical and had hoped to remain so in the future. Living in St. Catharines, when I was last involved in politics during an earlier Conservative rule, opened my eyes to a political world I wanted little to do with. If memory serves me correctly our local MPP was only known outside the district for his pronouncements in favour of public flogging. His heavy drinking prevented him from doing as much as he should have done for his constituents.

The local power brokers were decent enough men, and back then they were almost always men, but they seemed to me at any rate much more interested in influence and control than democracy or society. That is what I moved away from, moved away to the big city, where the politics were probably not any better but the place was large enough so I could just do my work, live my life and ignore what I did not like.

Mr Harris's and Mr Leach's recent political manoeuvres and statements to push through Bill 103 remind me too much of what I was trying to escape from. Now, however, the dictatorial methods and political ramifications of what the Conservative government is doing cannot, nor indeed should not, be ignored.

Why is it so important to Mr Harris to take the democratic rights away from the citizens of Toronto and give power to three trustees appointed by Mr Leach who will be answerable only to the Minister of Municipal Affairs

and Housing? This looks much like an old-time power grab with the interests of the subject population ignored. Gone now, for whatever reason, is the Conservative Party's commitment to having binding referendums that allow citizens greater input in government as mentioned in their document *Your Ontario, Your Choice*.

The average number of people in the new wards will be increasing from 29,500 to 52,000. With advances in technology and communications we should be increasing the representation of the local communities, not decreasing them. It is the local communities, as diverse and complex as they are, that give our city the vitality and dynamism that make our city the great place it is and even better place it can become.

Toronto has been consistently rated one of the most liveable cities in the world. The new municipality of 2.3 million people created by Bill 103 will put two mutually exclusive styles of urban living — the downtown core and the outer ring of suburbia — into constant conflict, a conflict that can only decrease the quality of life we have been noted for.

As a small, independent business person I am constantly concerned with expenditures. I believe that Bill 103, as it is being forced upon us, will only cost us more in increased taxes. Experience in other Canadian municipalities indicates costs of amalgamated cities exceed those of the independent cities before amalgamation.

Where is the sense in paying somewhat less in provincial tax when local taxes have to go up even more? If the downtown core residents have to pay extra to provide services for the majority outside the core, because we will be unfairly represented, it will not be long before downtown Toronto comes to resemble the deserted and crime-ridden American megacities.

It is my understanding that most of proposed savings in the spending are to come from 2,500 to 4,500 layoffs, including 500 police positions, 200 firefighters and 200 public health nurses and educators. Too many of these people, it would seem to me, directly influence the quality of life we have come to expect in Toronto. Should we really be getting rid of so many people providing essential services?

There are always things to improve, but there is no rational justification for the damaging whirligig of changes proposed by the Conservative government. Whirligigs, as mentioned in an *Economist* magazine article recently on Mr Harris, have a way of spinning out of control.

If Mr Harris is really so concerned about the bottom line, let him stop sending out those requests for money that I continually get from him inside these awfully expensive, high-quality envelopes. These are the same envelopes that say, "Neither printed nor mailed at public expense." It is my guess that these mailings were paid for by the same party donations he keeps asking me for, the same party donations that will give the sender extremely generous tax credits that have to be made up for by public expense. If that's his idea of saving money, then no thank you, Mr Harris. No thank you to that suggestion or any of your other suggestions on amalgamation.

If we are going to change local government, let's do it democratically. Thank you for listening.

Mr Sergio: Thank you for your presentation and thanks for coming down. A couple of questions, if I can fit them in, and then I want to leave some space for my colleague.

First question: Today, this morning, we had a number of architects come to make a presentation to our committee here. Also we had one of the former councillors here making a presentation. This is what he said: "A proposal, if it's sound, must stand up to public scrutiny. If it doesn't, it shouldn't be approved."

When we started the hearings Monday morning, we tried very hard — I'm not criticizing the members of the government because evidently they have directions as well — to get this committee to travel to the city halls of the municipalities here in Metro. We couldn't.

A two-part question: This would affect our democratic process and this would affect seriously, infringing upon, the people of Metro to have the opportunity to go to them and not them to come to the politicians. How do you view that?

Mr Bonaney: I'm not sure I understand fully what you're saying, but my view is that the way things are going here, the government's going to be far too removed —

Mr Sergio: I'll rephrase it, if you wish. What I was trying to say was that we have tried very hard to go to the people in the various municipalities.

Mr Bonaney: With the committee, you mean?

Mr Sergio: Yes. Of course, the government side has a majority. They had directions not to. Now, if this is such a good proposal the government is putting out for the people, why are they so afraid to go to the people and listen to the people?

Mr Bonaney: I just don't think they want the facts of the matter to be brought out into the open. They're just trying to ram this through. It's a typical power play that I saw all too often in the past.

Mr Sergio: My second question: They are spending millions of dollars to promote this and their agenda as well. Is this telling us, the people in Ontario, that it's not such a good proposal and they are pumping millions of dollars to try to sell it to the people in Ontario?

2000

Mr Bonaney: If you have to spend a lot of money to sell it, there's got to be something wrong with it.

Mr Sergio: Don't you find it offensive, as I do, that they are using my money, taxpayers' money, to promote something that does not really make sense?

Mr Bonaney: I feel like I'm getting ripped off by the government all the time. This is just another one on top of everything else.

Mr Gerretsen: Just very quickly, and this dealt with some of the presentations we heard earlier today as well: Each community, each one of the six municipalities really has a different makeup or a different mix. If I got the gist of the earlier presentations, particularly from the homeless organization, which I thought was very well done — having been involved with the Ontario Housing Corp, I know what he's talking about — I think there's the feeling that particularly the most vulnerable in our society simply will no longer be part of the system or will no longer be paid attention to, to the same degree, in a larger

governmental structure. I think that's the real concern people have. Do you have comments?

Mr Bonaney: I think there's no question of that. I put in 60-plus hours a week at my business. I have little time really for community work. But the people I know who do this type of thing tell me that as soon as you take local government away, people are even less inclined to help out. So those people at the bottom of the list are going to be put right away, completely out of everybody's mind.

The Chair: Thank you, sir, for coming forward this evening and making your presentation.

BRUCE HANSON

The Chair: Bruce Hanson, please. Good evening, Mr Hanson, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Bruce Hanson: Good evening. My name is Bruce Hanson. I live at 375 Elm Road, near Lawrence and Avenue Road. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I hope the voices that are raised before this committee will be taken into account. Above all I hope that the results of the referenda will be honoured.

Canadian and Torontonians: I'm a Canadian and know that it's an immense privilege to have been born into this rich western democracy. Democracy in Toronto has been suspended. It must be restored. Canada is rich in wealth, human and natural resources and culture. I'm a citizen of this awesome nation of Canada, yet it is the city of Toronto that I relate to and feel a part of.

Toronto is the economic capital of Canada, and much of the rest of the nation looks askance at us because of this. Despite the grudge that many have against Toronto, it is vital to the economic health of the region.

Toronto has been my home for all but two of my 37 years, and I both love and hate it. I love the cultural and intellectual smorgasbord. I am glad to live in a city with a wide range of employment opportunities. I am happy about the social supports that are available to the disadvantaged.

I hate the automobile pollution and the environmental costs associated with low-density suburban sprawl. My hate for the effects of the car, however, does not prevent me from owning one and occasionally using it to get around. I take great joy in using my bicycle to commute. When I use the subway, it's normally a quick and stress-free service. I dislike the move away from public transit, such as the reduced service on some routes, and the construction of more roads. I despair at the hostile environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

Large versus small: The amalgamation of Metro Toronto under Bill 103 will result in a reduction of local democracy. The approximate doubling of constituents per council member and the increase in the overall size of bureaucracy will result in less responsive government. I have seen first hand the difference in responsiveness and accessibility between small and large corporations. I have worked for IBM, Ontario Hydro, a small auto parts manufacturer and a small engineering company. Based on my experience, large corporate entities result in lower responsiveness to clients' needs and lower accessibility.

Trusteeship: The appointment of trustees to approve most financial decisions for Metro is a direct cancellation

of local democracy and is wrong. The citizens must be consulted before this is even contemplated. The way the Ontario government has implemented the rule of trustees over Metro is a clear indication that legal reform is required. The law must be changed to take control of municipalities away from provincial governments. The national or provincial governments must not be able to arbitrarily change municipal structures without a binding referendum.

City and the economy: The powerhouse states of Asia show that the engine of any economy is the city. However, the lack of democracy in these city-states has resulted in extremes of wealth and poverty that we would do well to avoid. The importance of cities to the economy has been extensively documented by authors such as Jane Jacobs. The Ontario government is clearly ignoring the importance of the city of Toronto to the economy of Ontario in its reckless amalgamation under Bill 103 and the legislation following it.

Dumping of social costs: The legislation following Bill 103, resulting in the transfer of 30% of welfare, 50% of family benefits, 75% of public health and 100% of public housing costs to the municipalities, shows the true foundation that Bill 103 has laid. Bill 103 and the legislation following it will result in dumping of social costs on Toronto. This will accelerate the urban decay that has started. Substantial increases in property taxes will cause further flight of business and residents from the city core.

Like many, I believe that reform of social services is necessary. The ideal reform is prevention of social ills rather than treatment of symptoms and results. The reality is that existing social programs must go hand in hand with reforms. Reform of social services does not start with their termination. The present Ontario government has been very strong in the termination of social services and negligent in the support and implementation of reformed social services. I ask you, will workfare jobs be created from the thousands of public service jobs to be cut in the new Metro?

Bill 103 and the environment: The city of Toronto has a high population density resulting in an energy-efficient and economic public transit system. Virtually all city services have a lower energy input and cost than the lower-density suburbs. To turn the tide on the environmental destruction that humanity is causing we need to uphold and strengthen the compact and efficient urban form of the city of Toronto.

Cars require huge inputs of non-renewable resources and reduce the quality of living through traffic accidents, the production of smog and the demand for valuable city space. Will dedicated transit and bike lanes be a priority in an amalgamated city? Will the needs of the car users win over the needs of the bike and transit users? Diluting the needs of the compact urban core with the needs of suburbs will serve the needs of neither. The needs of the core of the city will be lost in a move to an amalgamated city. Bill 103 is a direct attack on the compact urban form that must be nurtured if humanity is to survive.

Amalgamation and cost savings: In cities across North America, municipal amalgamation has resulted in higher costs. The only study that the Ontario government can

cite to indicate lower costs is the one it commissioned. Savings, if they are eventually realized, will come from significantly reduced services. Bill 103 and the legislation following it will force increases on to property taxes needed to uphold social services.

Bill 103 and a better Toronto: Not. Many reports on the reform of municipal government in Metro Toronto have called for a need for reform or restructuring to build a better Toronto. None of these reports has called for the end of local democracy.

It is clear that the effects of Bill 103 and associated legislation will not create a better Toronto. Bill 103 will result in a lose-lose situation for both residents and those in the surrounding region who depend on a healthy city. Thank you.

Mr Len Wood: I was listening to your presentation. You've made a link between Bill 103 and the dumping of the costs of welfare, public health and housing costs. In your opinion, do you feel that people should be not only opposed to Bill 103 but should be taking strong action against the government's dumping of the other services and costs, and the fact that Mike Harris used to consider himself to be a Taxfighter and now a lot of people have labelled him as a Taxhiker?

Mr Hanson: Absolutely. It's all part of the same package. I know we're here addressing Bill 103, but a number of the pieces of legislation all come together under the same focus.

Mr Len Wood: So you feel that the people should be taking a strong stand on dumping the other services?
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Mr Hanson: Absolutely.

Mr Len Wood: Comments have been made, and in part of your brief you're making an important point, about how large corporations are less responsive than small businesses. Would that same thing apply to having a megacity compared to a number of smaller cities?

Mr Hanson: It certainly has been the case across North America, and the effects on the urban core have been negative. I think that's why we should be very cautious. In fact, we should be throwing this out.

Mr Len Wood: With the larger bureaucracy of a megacity the costs can go right through the roof compared to the costs of operating the seven governments now.

Mr Hanson: Yes.

Mr Len Wood: Very interesting. Why would they bring in Bill 103 if nothing good is going to come of it?

Mr Hanson: I guess, as others have already speculated, it's to punish the lack of political support in the Toronto area.

Mr Len Wood: Punishing Toronto to a certain extent.

Mr Hanson: Yes.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Hanson, for being here this evening.

ELISE HOUGHTON

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call on Elise Houghton. Good evening and welcome to the committee. You may begin.

Ms Elise Houghton: Good evening. My name is Elise Houghton and I have been a resident of the city of

Toronto since 1976. I came to this city because I was fortunate enough to be offered work here. I've married here, I own a home here and I've raised two children here. I have considered it a privilege to live in the downtown area of a city which is one of neighbourhoods and communities and a city which offers excellent public education for its remarkably diverse population. It is a privilege to live in a city which values its diversity, its cultural offerings, its economic opportunities, its green spaces and its many traditional values.

Now, like many of Toronto's citizens, I am very concerned about the future of our city. I have come here today to speak not about the abolishing of legislated boundaries between what we now call Toronto and Scarborough and York and North York and East York and Etobicoke but about the abolishing of our city as a place where we feel we are in our city.

It has been my experience that our city is a place which listens to its citizens and which works with its citizens to be a reflection of what they value most. As a parent I have found Toronto to be a place where children are important, with schools and a school board which are responsive to the many and varied concerns of the parents of its students. As a mother, I've tried to teach my children to place a high value on the exercise of democracy in our own city and in Ontario and in Canada. These are not privileges we take lightly.

Bill 103, which we have read, is a proposed piece of legislation that effectively removes the democratic involvement of the people of Toronto in decisions to be made about their city, except for this, which I'm not sure about. It places an unelected group of trustees and transition team members in control of what happens in our city for a period without a specified term. In this I refer to section 9(10), which states, "On or after January 31, 1998, the Minister may...dissolve the board of trustees." This could be construed to mean that even after the election of a new representative body of municipal counsellors, there is no guarantee that Toronto's elected representatives would be in a position to act in ways which reflect the wishes of the residents of what will be Canada's largest city.

I would like to speak briefly about finances. I am not in any way a financial expert, so I'll begin by quoting an Austrian economist called Joseph Schumpeter:

"Public finances are one of the best starting points for an investigation of a society. The spirit of a people, its cultural level, its social structures, the deeds its policy may prepare — all of this and more is written in its fiscal history, stripped of all phrases. He who knows how to listen to the message here discerns the thunder of world history more clearly than anywhere else."

The deeds this government's financial policy proposes to prepare threaten to have a swift and profound effect on many people of Toronto. In spite of Minister Leach's promises quoted in the Toronto press that our property taxes will decrease, other analyses of the proposed exchange of education from property tax base and the downloading of major items such as public transit, local provincial road maintenance, sewage and water treatment, and the many important social services needed in our city, will require a substantial increase in the tax burden

on municipal businesses and residents to cover the financing they require in order to provide even adequate service.

As a resident I am concerned that I will no longer be able to afford the property taxes on my home. As a human being I am concerned that in order to maintain existing infrastructure and city services, the so-called soft services or social services to the many people who need them will continue to evaporate, causing great human suffering. I believe that financial help to the disadvantaged, the abused, the poor, the recent and not-so-recent immigrants, and the unemployed who need training to help them in their efforts to rejoin the taxable is the responsibility of everyone in our province and not only that of the residents of a new and densely populated megacity where the disadvantaged may be obliged to come to seek help.

I will not speak today on what I see as a great upcoming lessening in the quality of our public education system due to loss of local control, loss of adequately paid, full-time school trustees responsive to the public and loss of vital services to many students in our highly diverse social and cultural school population, except to say that I believe our local property taxes should support local educational needs.

Lastly, I'd like to speak about the environment. I know this is not in Bill 103, but I think it's related. I've been closely involved with public environmental education for quite a few years, and I am very concerned about initiatives, both educational and governmental, which foster the protection of the health of the natural environment, which is essential to our future prosperity. Both we and our elected representatives, as parents of young people — and that's you all, I assume — who will be the citizens of the next generation, have an obligation to understand the relationships between economic and lifestyle choices and to exercise common sense and wisdom in planning for the future.

The present city of Toronto and many of its surrounding municipalities currently have a wide variety of funded initiatives which contribute to local environmental protection and the health of the ecosystems which support a healthy human population. Since the election of the current Ontario government, provincial legislation which protects the natural environment, and government staff who formerly worked to ensure the enforcement of environmental regulations, have been drastically cut.

I am very concerned, when the financial decisions for our new megacity will be made by appointed trustees of this government, that many hard-won local environmental initiatives currently under way here — initiatives which contribute to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, restoring the health of polluted waterways, increasing green space, protecting habitat, reducing chemical loadings and helping the public to participate in local environmental activities — will fall through the cracks in the effort to finance the many other items our city will have to bear.

This government has demonstrated that it regards environmental protection requirements as "irritants" to provincial industry. It is a serious concern that it will equally see local environmental initiatives as irritants to our city, which it describes as an "economic engine."

Environmental protection is not a cost, it is an investment, and it is one which many of us wish to see continue in the interests of a possible healthy future. We do not consider Toronto to be an "economic engine"; we think of it as our home, our community, the place we live, we raise our children, we help our neighbours and, yes, we work. Economics factors are important, certainly, but it is a well and increasingly demonstrated fact that economic activities do not flourish where the environment has been devastated. It is important to get the priorities straight.

In conclusion, I hope to remain a resident of the city of Toronto if I can continue to afford to do so. This is my children's home, and I wish for them that they will become reasonable, responsible, participating citizens in this wonderful city. The process of amalgamation of our cities and the proposed amalgamation of our school boards by a government which has stated that it does not wish to listen to us has provided us with a crash course in the workings of, and in some cases the failure of, democracy which will probably last our lifetimes.

I'd just like to end with a quote from a philosopher, John Ralston Saul, which you may have heard, because he can say it better than I can: "Democracy is simply about the nature of legitimacy and whether the repository of that legitimacy — the citizens — are able to exercise the power its possession imposes upon them. We are having great difficulty today exercising the power of legitimacy...nothing in our current crisis is untouchable because of great mystic forces of inevitability. Legitimacy is not a matter of mystics, but of practicality, as are the actions of a healthy democracy."

Mr Parker: Ms Houghton, thank you very much for your presentation. Thank you for appearing before us this evening. Thank you for assisting us in this process. Thanks also for quoting Joseph Schumpeter. I've attended many hours of hearings with this legislation and you're the first one who's quoted Schumpeter, who I've read quite a bit myself.

You professed not to have a great deal of expertise in financial matters, but you dwelt at some length on financial concerns and put forward a strong financial analysis. One of the arguments that's been put forward in favour of amalgamation is that it will yield financial benefits. Now, do you see these as not worthy of pursuing?

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Ms Houghton: I suppose it depends on benefits to whom.

Mr Parker: The argument is that an amalgamated structure could do better for less, make more efficient use of public resources so that more services could be provided more effectively at lower cost to the taxpayers in the Toronto area. I'm interested in your comments.

Ms Houghton: I do not profess to be any kind of financial analyst, but everything I've heard from people who have tried to simply add up numbers and say, "The city spent X and we have this in property taxes and we have this much available at the moment," all the services which have been listed in various sources, which I'm sure you're aware of more than I am, seem to cost more than that. We're also assuming that our property taxes will not

go down, although we read that in the paper, because it doesn't seem to add up, so if you can guarantee us that, that would be very nice, but —

Mr Parker: But if financial benefits are available, are they worth pursuing or are they irrelevant?

Ms Houghton: That depends on from what and to whom.

Mr Parker: You've listed a number of benefits that you've identified —

Ms Houghton: Can I make an intrusion here? I believe that financial benefits to business, which this seems to benefit, could be to our loss, and I'm not a businessperson.

Mr Parker: Tell me how business in particular is benefited.

Ms Houghton: I can only take the example of hearing that this government has done a great deal of work to make sure that benefits to business increase. I could go on, if you want, about cuts to environmental legislation which are big benefits to business. We seem to think that all the poor people in our city are going to be much poorer because of this. I know that we're going to have 25% cuts to my children's education. I haven't yet seen where we're going to win.

The Vice-Chair: I'm sorry I have to cut in; our time is up. Thank you very much for appearing, Ms Houghton.

LAURA WEINTRAUB

The Vice-Chair: I would like to call on Laura Weintraub. Good evening, Ms Weintraub. You may begin.

Dr Laura Weintraub: I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to be heard this evening. I trust that all other residents of the city and province equally interested in donating their thoughts, fears and ideas will also enjoy the same democratic entitlement. There has been some concern, as I'm sure you are aware, that this is a shadow consultation. I am here in a demonstration of faith in the abilities of a reasoned, diverse and resourceful populace to be heard, and with faith that our reasoning will actually be reflected in the actions of those who govern.

One of the fundamental principles of the agreement to be governed is transparency. We expect that the actions of government will not be hidden away in dank crevices, deprived of the light of public scrutiny. Those who govern do so at the pleasure of the governed. It is my understanding that the present government is obscuring our view of what is happening.

Bill 103 is a vehicle for drawing a curtain across what should be transparent. The purposeful design of laws that forbid public participation or representation, that suspend representation or scrutiny, has raised deep suspicion about governance now in Ontario. Bill 103 is not the only or first law that this government has written placing the province's governors beyond representation, beyond scrutiny, or beyond accountability. But Bill 103, as it stands, most severely suspends, deletes, cancels our very right to governmental transparency.

Perhaps some are not aware of the fact that the legislation grants enormous powers, including power over millions and millions of dollars, to a small and secret trinity — and here I intend no reference to cowboys — to

so-called trustees, ensuring that they meet in secret, decide in secret, spend in secret and, in effect, govern in secret.

Next, the legislation grants enormous powers, including powers over mega-millions of dollars, to a small and secret transition team. They too will meet in secret, decide in secret, spend in secret, govern in secret.

I did not have the opportunity to exercise the right to vote for any of the appointed trustees, yet you believe I have the obligation to obey them and to pay taxes into a secret coffer. I will not have the opportunity to exercise the right to vote for any of the transition team appointees, yet you believe here too I have the obligation to obey them and to pay more taxes into a secret coffer. The coup de grâce is that Bill 103 shelters this secrecy from court review, purposefully. Why?

I wish to put you on notice that the government is about to shatter the principles that frame our agreement: the agreement of the governed and the governors, an agreement resting on democracy and transparency. Bill 103 disentitles me and others from enjoying representation, from our duty to scrutinize the expenditure of public money.

What is more pernicious, Bill 103 disentitles us from the safeguards of court review. If you proceed to break our agreement, I must reconsider my agreement to be governed by you. Either I have elected representation or I do not. Failing such representation, either the justice system and court scrutiny are respected or I too am freed from such scrutiny. In other words, we are a partnership, as uncomfortable as that may be for either party. But if this government dismantles the bricks and mortar of democracy, then I must consider that I and my neighbours are thereby released from our governance agreement. Surely this is not a dissolution that either party would want, for the alternative is an absence of civil society. The alternative to civil rule of law is the uncivil rule of — what?

The trustees must not continue to operate and spend in secrecy, shrouded from the people, privileged from court review. The proposed transition team must not be permitted to operate and spend in secrecy, similarly shrouded and privileged.

At the very least, I still respectfully suggest that those sections of Bill 103 that shatter the civil agreement between us be replaced. I call on you to restore the principles of accountability, transparency, genuine legality, and democracy.

I am not aware that any recognized procedure has been followed to challenge the mental competence of those already elected to serve their municipalities, nor am I aware that any recognized process has been followed to investigate the implied criminal intentions of those representatives. What then is the justification for supplanting the elected with the appointed? Further, with the transition team, Bill 103 already challenges the mental competence and integrity of those to be mega-elected. What really is the justification for supplanting the to-be-elected with the to-be-appointed?

I can only imagine two motives that would cause you to leave this bill as is, to do your best to ensure that not even the courts may review what is done and allocated in

secrecy. Motive one: fear. The government must fear what will happen if people see what is done, so the doors are closed, the windows are shuttered, those who know are gagged. Motive two: corruption. The government must be planning to aid and abet corrupt profiteering. If you are not frightened of those you govern, you do not cower from public scrutiny. And if you are above the crassness of corruption and profiteering with public moneys, you do not cower from the court's scrutiny.

The Statutory Powers Procedure Act sets out some very basic rules for public administration in this province. Those rules have to do with fairness. Very few would argue that our courts are a perfect system, but why does this government in Bill 103 take the explicit trouble to make reference to this piece of legislation, exempting the appointees from the very laws that address the fairness of public procedure? Is it the self-serving fear of the governors, or is it anticipated opportunities for corruption? It can only be one or the other.

There is not time here to address many other crucial aspects of Bill 103 and how it is, in effect, an act of destruction. I will not here speak to the issue of our communities' frail elderly and how the devolution of funding for long-term-care institutions will extend and deepen the misery of too many of our senior citizens when they are at their most vulnerable. We see what is happening to our elderly neighbours, family, friends; mega-government will not.

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I will not speak about the stench of gratuitous child poverty here and how the devolution of social welfare will fray the last remaining strands of our collective wellbeing. We see what is happening to children and teens among our neighbours, family and friends. Mega-government will not see.

I will not speak to the greed-driven mantra of efficiency, the new religion that means savaging the very jobs of those who help care for our elders, for our children, for our daily landscapes. We see what is happening to younger adults, to adults once productive, among our neighbours, families and friends. Mega-government will not see this.

The slogan of efficiency over jobs has already intensified the misery of thousands of the newly displaced across this province and of those who are ill and frail and old and weak, the misery of those who would continue to care for them and those who would remain, if they could, active contributors yet who now face personal ruin. They are my neighbours and, I remind this government, they are your neighbours too. Their ruin is our ruin.

You think perhaps that Toronto is to be bear-baited. You have set an ugly leghold trap on what you appear to hate and now you have begun to gnaw at the trapped limb. You may succeed with your self-inflicted amputation. But make no mistake; it is your own body politic you are destroying. You need not continue to gnaw at the injured limb. Perhaps you have forgotten, you have the key to the trap. You can release yourself from this uncivil mess.

Historically, the rule of law in civil society replaced what? Do you know? I urge you to consider very carefully what you destroy here when you place the appointed

over the elected, when you place your anointed ones outside the scrutiny of the public and beyond the reach of the court. Consider what is the alternative to representation, to accountability, to transparency and to court review. It is likely that you will either consider or experience the consequences for shrouding what belongs in the sunlight. I thank you for your attention.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Weintraub. I'd like now to call upon Ian Thompson.

Mr Gerretsen: Is there no time left to ask any questions?

The Vice-Chair: No. That was 10 minutes.

IAN THOMPSON

The Vice-Chair: Good evening, Mr Thompson, and welcome to the standing committee. You may begin.

Mr Ian Thompson: Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Ian Thompson and I'm a proud citizen of the city of Toronto. One of my concerns about Bill 103 is the fact that it is not a result of any advanced study or expert report. The government has not really investigated all of the problems and issues that go with such a megaproject. In fact, Bill 103 is not really a complete bill at all. It's only part of a bill on amalgamation and the rest will come when it's too late to avoid this mistake.

The government has decided that it will impose a unified city with a single council of 45 members and then its collective brain has come to a full stop at this point. The Ontario government has no idea how it's going to amalgamate all the different municipal departments and services throughout Metro and neither do we.

I personally believe that if the government took the time to investigate the actual situation and confront the details of amalgamation, it might realize that this whole idea is flawed and that it will mean a bigger, more expensive bureaucracy less able to deliver services and make decisions efficiently and effectively. The city of Toronto is big enough as it is, probably too big. Why compound the problem by a factor of six or seven?

The mega-council will be so powerful that political parties and special interests will vie for control of the council. What we'll end up with is really another provincial government within the province. Municipal government, that is, government of the local people by the local people for the local people, will be replaced by power groups and a mega-bureaucracy.

What a growing number of people are coming to realize is that the city of Toronto, which began as the little town of York and evolved into one of the most citizen-focused and creative cities in the world, will die with the passage of Bill 103. The city of Toronto will survive in name only, not in body or in spirit.

There is nothing in the bill which sets out how the government proposes to amalgamate, unify or coordinate all the different municipal departments and services now existing throughout Metro. The creation of a new 45-member legislative body is only the tip of the iceberg. The mega-dollar question is how the government plans to amalgamate all of the boards, administrative bodies and municipal employees and yet save money and maintain the same standard of efficiency and responsiveness to the

needs of the citizens as the standards set by the city of Toronto, North York, Scarborough, York, Etobicoke and the borough of East York.

"The devil is in the details" is an expression which seems to have come out of this megacity debate. It simply means that the implementation of a plan itself may create its success or create a nightmare of chaos. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Mr Leach, claims that the new, unified city will save money and be more efficient, but how can he make this assertion without knowing the actual structure and organization of this new megalopolis?

Also, how can the Legislature of Ontario approve a bill which clearly indicates the government has no idea how it plans to amalgamate the various municipal departments and services, like parks and recreation, public works, sewage, water, garbage pickup and waste, building and planning, housing, health, welfare, other social services, care of the elderly, fire, ambulance and transit, and how can the Legislature of Ontario approve legislation where the government has handed over dictatorial powers to a transition team?

I direct your attention to one of the most undemocratic parts of this bill. Section 16(4)(a) says the transition team shall "consider what further legislation may be required to implement this act, and make detailed recommendations to the minister." Nothing wrong with that. Section (b) talks about considering restrictions on the amounts the new city can spend. Nothing wrong with that. Section (c) says the transition team shall "establish the new city's basic organizational structure," and then section (d) goes on and says that the transition team will hire "department heads and other employees as the transition team considers necessary to ensure the good management of the new city and the continuity of municipal services."

In other words, section 16(4)(c) gives these mega-czars power to decide the structure of the new city without democratic process and without a decision being made by duly elected representatives. Section 16(4)(d) gives the same transition czars the power to hire mega-managers, again without any democratic process and without duly elected municipal officials having any say in the matter.

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This absolute power to decide and establish the new structure of the megalopolis amounts to an unjustified suspension of democracy. It is my suggestion that this committee recommend that section 16(4)(c) and (d) of Bill 103 should be struck out completely. If this is done, then the transition team will end up doing what should have been done in the first place, namely, studying this supercomplex problem, hold public consultations and then make recommendations to the minister as to the appropriate legislation and bylaws to give effect to this plan.

Then the minister should present to the Legislature the rest of the essential aspects of this plan. Instead, the minister is presenting the Legislature and the people of Toronto and Ontario with a fait accompli, a structure imposed on Metro Toronto by a few all-powerful persons who are not accountable to the people and are not even liable for their mistakes.

We all know the reason the government is resorting to these arbitrary measures is that it is pressing to have its

megalopolis operational by January 1, 1998. Why the unseemly haste? We are not at war so why do we mindlessly accept this suspension of democracy?

Besides, haste makes waste. The implementation of Bill 103 ought to be postponed until the transition team has studied the whole problem and presented a detailed plan to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Legislature. Otherwise, the ministry and the government are getting away with an end run around the Legislature and an end run around the democratic process.

What we have here is a government guilty of urban planning without a complete plan.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you. We have about a minute and a half for questions.

Mr Gerretsen: It's too bad we only get a minute and a half. In any event, I'd like to congratulate you on your presentation and the other people as well.

As a former municipal politician — I was one for 16 years — I find it an affront that we hear that the reason the trustees have been set up is that somehow the elected people that we have now would somehow dispose of the assets. As everybody knows, if the elected people were ever to do anything, the government could, by a stroke of the pen, reverse anything that they did anyway. It's as if they were — from what we heard earlier from the parliamentary assistant — afraid that the elected representatives are going to pick up the buildings and take them to South America or something with them. Absolute nonsense.

Do you have any comments on the trustees and the fact that the elected politicians obviously aren't trusted any more?

Mr Thompson: I don't have any comment. I just didn't have time enough in my presentation to deal with that area. But I agree with the person ahead of me that the trustees and all the power that they have, plus the transition team, is a disgrace and a shame to our country. This is typical, I think, of the omnibus bill that we've seen before. It's the same sort of attitude to the whole process of democracy. It's a pain and something that you really don't want to put up with, so if you can find some way to get around debate in the Legislature and things like that, you pass 101 regulations or you pass laws to give trustees all sorts of powers and transition teams all sorts of powers so that nobody can look at them and criticize them.

I can't understand why this government feels so insecure that it has to do that because the polls seem to indicate it has some popularity. You get the impression from this government that they're worried they're going to lose the next election so they're going to have to force all these things in in the next year before they get turfed out.

That's the impression I get, that they want to impose this Common Sense Revolution on us before they are sent on their way.

Mr Gerretsen: I think you may be right.

The Chair: Mr Thompson, I hate to interrupt, but we've exceeded your allotted time. Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation to the committee tonight.

KIMBERLY BADOVINAC

The Chair: Would Kimberly Badovinac please come forward. Good evening, Kimberly.

Ms Kimberly Badovinac: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 103. Although I know that this standing committee has been flooded with requests, I want to impress upon you that for every one requester and each presenter, there are many more who share the same views and concerns. In this vein I would like to acknowledge the support of my family members, friends and co-workers who came here tonight.

The government uses the metaphor of "government as corporation." I am hoping that by using this same language and employing this same metaphor, you will understand and appreciate the message I have to share.

I would like to start with a quote: "The public be damned.... I don't take any stock in this silly nonsense about working for anybody's good but our own because we are not. When we make a move, we do it because it is in our own interest to do so, not because we expect to do someone else some good."

This statement was made by William Vanderbilt, the railroad tycoon, back in the late 1800s. It shows utter contempt for everyone but the corporate powers. What is really quite remarkable to me is that these very same sentiments are expressed in the language used by a late 20th century government.

Corporations which are leading edge, which are effective, which are successful would all agree that this is not the way business is done in today's world. In fact, if we were to look at this proposed legislation from the perspective of change management, we would see that it falls short of the "best practices" Mr Leach referred to in his presentation to you. The "command and control" management philosophy presented in this bill died long ago.

Change management is a process by which change is effectively accomplished. It is a process which ensures that the kinds of changes made will be of long-lasting value to an organization. Change management is really what this proposed legislation should be all about.

There are three key principles of change management that I wish to discuss tonight. The first is that effective change results when the people affected by the change are allowed to participate freely in the decision-making and in the outcome. In Metro we have an accumulated political experience among the mayors and councillors that far exceeds the political experience of the elected representatives of Queen's Park, especially as it pertains to local governance, yet the Conservative government has totally dismissed their views and continues to villainize them despite that fact that they are doing their jobs, namely, responding to the concerns of the constituents.

I find it ironic that Mr Leach depicted the mayors as protectors of their fiefdoms when in actuality this bill gives him absolutist powers as Minister of Municipal Affairs and gives enormous powers to appointed, not elected officials under the guise of protecting assets. Who does the province propose will pay for the salaries and expenses of these appointments? Why, the taxpayers of Metro. And to whom do these appointed officials report? Mr Leach.

Although Mr Leach stated repeatedly on Monday that we are here to discuss Bill 103 and only Bill 103, good managers do not think about issues in isolation. I cannot think of one professor at the Schulich School of Business where I am currently doing an MBA who would encourage budding managers and entrepreneurs to look at opportunities without considering their context. The right hand wants to know what the left hand is doing. If I'm the marketing manager, it is in my interest to understand and keep abreast of developments in production, accounting and sales. So Bill 103 cannot be discussed as a separate entity from the other reforms that are being thrust upon us.

The offloading of social programs and health care to municipalities will have a significant and detrimental impact on all of us and I think everyone in Ontario realizes this. Yet once again the very people, the citizens of Ontario, who will be affected have been repeatedly denied access to discuss their concerns with this government. One participant who attended a workshop I delivered in northeastern Ontario just last week posed the question, "What do you do when the government's doors are shut, shut, shut?" And those are all exclamation points. It is hard to give people hope when this government has shown time and time again that it has no desire to hear what average Ontarians, those directly affected by the proposed changes, have to say.

What do I worry about? Well, my father is in a nursing home here in Toronto. He's about the age of Mr Parker's father. He had a very serious stroke a few years ago and he is now in a wheelchair. I wish I could have brought him here tonight but it is a little too late for him and this side of the room it is proposed we have these hearings in is not very wheelchair-friendly. My sister and I selected a nursing home for him here in Toronto because there are few options in the Niagara area where we are from.

2050

I thank my lucky stars each and every day that this city has a facility like Fudger House available. What will happen to my father when an amalgamated Toronto is overburdened by the downloading? What will happen when the transition team dictates spending rates that are insufficient to support the kinds of social and health care programs that my father and many other vulnerable people like him need?

What will happen to my brother Anthony who would love to be a homeowner, but will likely never be able to handle both a mortgage and a heavy property tax burden? Will he and other young people have to leave Toronto and relocate to other cities, perhaps other provinces?

What will happen to my friend Cathi who is a civic employee? What assurances are there in this legislation that her job will not vanish or be privatized? We are real people and of course we are suffering these real consequences. I doubt that the proposed neighbourhood committees, again not elected, are going to address these concerns.

Companies on the vanguard are companies that realize that healthy and happy employees are capital assets that improve the bottom line. Take Husky, for example. Based in Bolton, this company has implemented all kinds of innovative programs aimed at improving the health of their employees. The results: Absenteeism has gone down

and productivity has gone up. What about Hewlett-Packard? They refused to get caught up in the downsizing frenzy and proceeded with alternatives like operational improvements and training and skill development opportunities to staff. Human capital has become their competitive edge. Think how enriched the public policy process would be if we listened to the diverse opinions of Ontarians. Think about how wonderful it would be if we could work together towards a purposeful and common agenda.

The second major tenet of change management is that effective change can only take place in an environment of open and honest dialogue and communication. When I sat here on Monday morning I listened to Mr Leach's presentation, searching and hoping for just one morsel, one shred of data which would support this proposed legislation. I guess tired dogma is the privilege of a majority government, because it was so full of hackneyed and trite platitudes that one had to ask "Where's the beef?" Despite the fact that the KPMG study has been resoundingly dismissed, it remains a fundamental data source for his assertions. He alludes to numerous studies but these have not been openly shared, and from what I gather they do not support the process outlined in this bill.

Now I know that Mr Harris has made much of the recent poll showing an upward blip in his popularity. What I would like to ask is, how much money was spent to finance this rather modest increase in popular support, that is, how many television and radio ads, how many flyers, how many midnight faxes did it take? A government with a truly progressive vision, with social good at the heart and essence of its public policies, would not have to resort to this kind of propaganda. They would be able to dialogue in an open way with their constituents.

The third and final proposal of change management is that change is best advanced in an incremental and staged process. The timetable proposed for this amalgamation is in my opinion far too ambitious and, as we all know, haste has a tendency to make great waste. Incremental change allows for attitudes to change in concert with practice; it allows for smoother transitions; it ensures greater buy-in; it allows for input along the way, all of which will benefit the final outcome.

There is a tremendous dearth of trust and faith in political institutions in this country. The survey data collected by Ekos Research in Ottawa demonstrates that Canadians have become very cynical about government and that this cynicism runs very deep. If we were to ask Canadians the question, "Would you be proud if your child became a politician?" many would answer, "No."

Henry Mintzberg from McGill has said, "Attacks on government are attacks on the fabric of society," but to truly respect political institutions, people need to feel respected by their elected representatives.

Successful companies are ethical companies, are those companies that take the moral high ground. In one of my courses at York, executives from General Electric came to talk to us about business practice. Did you know they regularly refuse to do business with countries whose practices contradict their ethical code? Sure, there are opportunity costs but they realize that adhering to their principles has a greater payoff in the long run.

In closing, Mr Chair and members of the standing committee, I believe you have an opportunity to make history. You can exercise heroic and ethical political leadership, and you know how much this is needed. You can send the message to the people of Toronto that you are not drones who toe the party line. You can really listen to the people making deputations, your constituents, your own hearts and minds. Conscientiousness is the moral style of leading-edge corporations. Things should be done for good reasons that can be explained and justified to others. A truthful and open and participatory approach should prevail.

I beseech you to vote with your conscience. Tell Mr Leach and Mr Harris that Bill 103 is simply unacceptable as it is. The principles of change management, as I have outlined, are required. It will take real courage but all of us are here to support you.

The Chair: Thank you, Kimberly. You've effectively used up your 10 minutes. Thank you for coming forward tonight and making your presentation.

Would Angela Slazak please come forward? If you'll just wait a minute, the clerk will see if Angela's in the hallway.

Mr Gerretsen: I would request unanimous consent to perhaps hear from some of the other people who are here, who undoubtedly may have something to say as well, Mr

Chair. Since we have a few extra minutes, I'm sure we wouldn't mind listening to someone else.

The Chair: We have a formal cancellation policy which isn't in effect tonight, and seeing it's 9, we're not supposed to sit beyond 9 anyway, so I think I'm going to follow the motion passed in the Legislature that says we sit to 9. There will be a cancellation procedure that is in effect tomorrow, which actually the clerk may want to reiterate as we finish up for the night, just so people here who may want to get on a list through the cancellation process may have an opportunity.

Clerk Pro Tem: Between 8:30 and 9 every morning, we'll be collecting names of people who happen to be in the room throughout the day and are willing to take a cancelled time slot on next to no notice. This will be in effect until February 13, when anybody can just sign their names, after February 13, which is the cutoff date for oral presentations. We'll only be accepting cancellation names from people who have previously registered with the committee. It will be open every morning between 8:30 and 9 to take names from people who are willing to go on a standby basis.

The Chair: Thank you, committee, and thank you, audience for being respectful of the rules of the Legislature this evening. We'll recess until tomorrow morning at 9 am.

The committee adjourned at 2057.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
*Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington PC) for Mr Young
Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West / -Ouest PC) for Mr Danford
Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence L) for Mr Gravelle
Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber PC) for Mrs Ross
Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands /
Kingston et Les Îles L) for Mr Gravelle
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Hardeman
Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East / -Est L) for Mr Gravelle
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC) for Mr Stewart
Mr John L. Parker (York East / -Est PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt ND) for Mr Len Wood

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale ND)
Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North / -Nord L)
Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South / -Sud PC)
Mr Paul Jones, local government policy branch,
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Clerk pro tem /

Greffière par intérim: Ms Lisa Freedman

Staff / Personnel: Ms Lorraine Luski, Ms Susan Swift, Mr Jerry Richmond, research officers,
Legislative Research Service

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 6 février 1997

Standing committee on general government

City of Toronto Act, 1996

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Loi de 1996 sur la cité de Toronto



Chair: Bart Maves
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
 GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Thursday 6 February 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO
**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
 AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Jeudi 6 février 1997

The committee met at 0904 in room 151.

CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996
 LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Consideration of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

TOM CHURCHILL

The Chair (Mr Bart Maves): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the standing committee on general government. Mr Churchill, I believe. You have 10 minutes this morning to make your presentation. At the end of that 10 minutes, if there's any time remaining, I'll ask the NDP caucus to use that time for some questions.

Mr Tom Churchill: My name is Tom Churchill. Like many of the residents of this great city of Toronto, I am an immigrant. I grew up in the town of Fairfield, Connecticut, in Fairfield county, which in the late 1960s and mid-1960s had the highest per capita income of any county in the United States.

Fairfield was in many ways a typical New England town. The hub of town life was the town centre. It was a wide green public square surrounded by white colonial-style buildings: the town hall, the church, and the large, graceful homes that some of the founding families had built and lived in. It was a town in which people took politics, which meant direct democratic process, very seriously; in which the town meeting was a real and vital and, very often, contentious forum for discussion and resolution of local issues. Many considered life in Fairfield idyllic. It was safe, it was pretty, it had an excellent school system. There were those among the population who thought that the homogeneity of the population was an additional attractive feature. Life was good there.

In one very important way, though, Fairfield was not a typical New England town. It was also a suburb of New York City. It took exactly 60 minutes to get from my front door to Lincoln Center in the heart of Manhattan, although, it's true, it was fast driving. Being so near to New York, I grew up with an image of the city as two realities. There was a New York I actually saw and was allowed to experience and that was always exciting and exhilarating to visit: the New York of Broadway theatres,

Lincoln Center, Rockefeller Center, the Statue of Liberty, the Museum of Natural History, the Empire State Building. Then there was the New York that I heard stories about but only actually ever saw from the train when it stopped at 125th Street: the hideous and dangerous New York epitomized by the bleak reality that was Harlem: ghettoization, poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, crime, racial hatred, crumbling infrastructure and an educational system in utter disarray.

Now, although my parents and my friends' parents didn't have to say out loud how lucky we were to live where we lived, the message permeated every aspect of our lives, in which the city and its problems formed an ever-present backdrop against which we measured and understood our privilege.

Imagine my surprise, then, and my unexpected delight, when I came to Toronto in 1970 to attend the University of Toronto. Here was a city with life. Here was a city that people actually chose to live in. Here was a city whose streets were safe to walk at night. Here was a clean city. Here was a city of neighbourhoods, where people took pride in their homes and their gardens. Here I found something I had never been prepared to anticipate: a major North American city that was completely liveable, right down to its core.

Imagine my family's surprise too as my graduation day approached and I told them I had decided to stay and make my life here in Toronto. Although they had visited over the years and come to love Toronto for its vitality, they were actually horrified. They said: "It's a foreign country. You can't live in a foreign country." Remembering Quebec and the War Measures Act, they said: "It's politically unstable. It's not democratic. There's no Bill of Rights, there's no Constitution." Try to forgive them for thinking the American way is the only right way. It's an ingrained idea and very hard to shake.

I tried my best to explain and defend the system of parliamentary democracy here in Canada, and until now, through many difficult political issues and some crises, have never doubted the integrity, viability and basic democratic commitment of this system of government.

But now I see on the horizon the demise of my Toronto under the guise of administrative efficiency and fiscal integrity through the proposed amalgamation of Toronto, North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough, East York and York in Bill 103.

I oppose this amalgamation for many reasons that I'm sure you have heard already and will hear again. When you threaten a common and cherished way of life, as Bill 103 does, you must expect that many who come before you will speak with similar misgivings.

Five specific points:

(1) Not one study, not even the one commissioned by the current government, has concluded that amalgamation will result in dollars saved.

(2) There is no convincing evidence that the proposed amalgamation will achieve administrative efficiencies. Indeed, many of the provisions of the bill seem to complicate rather than simplify the process of governing the cities involved.

(3) There is no provision in Bill 103 defining the uses to which the approximately \$1 billion in municipal reserve funds can be put. There should be such a provision.

(4) Urban experts have pointed out that a government of the sort proposed in Bill 103 will be much less able and probably much less willing to respond with unique solutions to the particular needs of and opportunities presented by different areas within this city. Local councils can, and do, do so and this is one reason that our cities are vibrant and liveable.

(5) I believe it is a terrible mistake to fund social assistance out of property tax revenues as the related Bill 104 proposes. The property tax base is not flexible enough to deal with the increased need for social assistance during times of recession. Indeed, the burden on the city of Toronto would be disproportionately onerous, given the higher percentage of the population here who receive some form of social assistance.

I fear that Bill 103 will result in a distinct and ongoing erosion of the quality of life in the Toronto that I have made my home; the Toronto that is the only home my children have ever known, where their schools now are safe, vital and sound places providing opportunities to learn and develop in many ways; where they have learned to respect the ethnic and cultural traditions of their classmates and friends; where they learn compassion and the need for personal commitment and action in helping those less fortunate than themselves; where they experience our neighbourhood as lively and safe. I fear Bill 103 will turn Toronto into the fearsome New York City of my childhood.

I fear that much of what is good about Toronto is at stake in Bill 103. But I feel a still deeper fear when I see the way in which the current government's proposals suspend democratic process. Let me refer for a moment to an excerpt from the World Book Encyclopedia description of democracy:

"Throughout history, the most important aspects of the democratic way of life have been the principles of individual equality and freedom. Accordingly, citizens in a democracy should be entitled to equal protection of their persons, possessions and rights; have equal opportunity to pursue their lives and careers; and have equal rights of political participation. In addition, the people should enjoy freedom from undue interference and domination by government."

Let me repeat those last points: Citizens should "have equal rights of political participation. In addition, people should enjoy freedom from undue interference and domination by government." The Ontario government's placing of local elected city councils under trusteeship clearly violates these essential aspects of democratic process.

0910

As you know, Bill 103 provides for the organizational and staffing structure of the new municipality to be determined by a transition team appointed by the cabinet and reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It provides that the new council cannot overturn staff appointments or other decisions made by these provincial appointees and that none of the decisions of the transition team may be challenged in court.

Let me quote again from the World Book article on democracy: "An essential characteristic of democratic government is an independent judiciary. It is the duty of the justice system to protect the 'rules' and the rights of individuals under these rules, especially against the government itself." Bill 103 nullifies the power of the courts to protect essential democratic rights of individuals in Ontario.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs was quoted on page 1 of the *Globe* on February 4 as saying: "We are at a historic moment in the life of this city. We have a one-time opportunity ahead of us to take advantage of the best ideas in government innovation and planning." We are indeed at a historic moment, a moment that may well mark the departure from democratic process in Toronto and in Ontario. I entreat this committee and this government to let the people whose lives and communities will be most affected by Bill 103 decide whether the ideas contained in it do in fact represent the best ideas in government innovation and planning. Listen to the results of the upcoming municipal referendums.

In the same article the *Globe* quoted Mr Leach as saying, "I think the legislation is pretty good. There will be some minor changes," but nothing sweeping. I entreat this committee and this government to let the people whose lives and communities will be most affected by Bill 103 decide just how good this legislation is. Listen to the results of the upcoming municipal referendums. Let our democratic traditions prevail. It is clearly a duty of your office.

Winston Churchill was a defender of democracy without whose leadership in the Second World War we might well all be living under a very different system today. He said government of the people, by the people, for the people, still remains the sovereign definition of democracy. Robert Maynard Hutchins, who is a former dean of Yale Law School and president of the University of Chicago, said, "Democracy is the only form of government that is founded on the dignity of man, not the dignity of some men, of rich men, of educated men or of white men, but of all men."

In closing, let me say this: When I took back on my decision to live in Toronto, I know it was not from naïveté that I assured my American family that democracy was alive and well here. It was not through lack of knowledge of the workings of a parliamentary democracy that I believed I would enjoy the right to meaningful participation in government. But I had no idea that this right could be summarily suspended at the whim of a few individuals. This should not be the case.

I urge you to reconsider Bill 103 in its entirety. I believe this legislation needs sweeping change, not just some minor amendments.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Churchill. You've done a very good job of exhausting your 10 minutes completely, but I want to thank you for coming forward this morning and making your presentation to the committee. Thank you very much.

BRONWYN DRAINIE

The Chair: Bronwyn Drainie? Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Ms Bronwyn Drainie: My name's Bronwyn Drainie. I've lived in this city all my life. I wonder if any of you remember the Yonge Street mall? Remember that? We had it in the early 1970s for about three or four summers, I remember. I can't remember exactly where it started. I think it was College Street.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Gerrard.

Ms Drainie: Was it Gerrard? From there south? I have the happiest memories of strolling on that mall and watching the city go by. But my best memory is of an evening when my friend Rafe and I were ambling along and we saw a man standing by himself looking in a shoe store window and we both did a sort of doubletake and said, "Isn't that Jack Albertson, the movie actor?" Jack Albertson had won the Oscar the year before for *The Subject Was Roses*, so that's why his face was very familiar to us. Sure enough, it was him. We kind of poked each other in the ribs and dared each other and eventually we went up and introduced ourselves to him and told him that we were big fans. He was delighted to stop and talk.

In those days, we were just starting to make movies in a big way in Toronto and things weren't very well set up to handle the talent that came to town. They'd be busy all day working on the movie set, but then they'd be kind of at loose ends in the evening in a city where they didn't really know anybody. Jack Albertson kind of fell in with us and we strolled the Yonge Street mall together for another half-hour or so, listening to the street musicians. Finally, I invited him back to my apartment with Rafe for coffee and we all became friends. He was much older than I was, and I ended up setting him up for a couple of golf games with my stepfather, because he was a big golfer, while he was in town.

As we were drinking coffee that first night, he said to us: "Do you have any idea what a miracle this is? Do you have any idea what an incredible city you live in?" We both looked a little surprised and he said: "Look what happened to me tonight. First of all, I could stroll around this downtown area of the city, not just feeling safe but actually enjoying myself, not having to veer around piles of garbage in order to walk on the streets. Then I met you, perfect strangers, and here I am drinking coffee in your apartment." He said, "You know, I've worked in just about every city in the United States and I haven't been in one where you could do this for, I don't know, 20 or 30 years."

In fact, he was so moved by the Toronto experience that the next day he called his wife and daughter back in Los Angeles and told them, "You've just got to come up here and see this city while I'm working here. You won't believe it unless you see it with your own eyes." They came and we all became friends.

That's the kind of thing that can happen in Toronto because it is Toronto, because it's been cared for by the citizens who love it and wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Of course the place has changed over the years and it will continue to change. That's in the nature of cities. I'm old enough to remember the horse-drawn milk wagon that used to come down our street and the day four-year-old Mary Jane Johnson got kicked by the horse and the ambulance came, with the sirens. It was quite an adventure. I remember Joe and Luigi, two brothers from Naples who brought their fruit and vegetable truck around three times a week, and they taught us how to dance the tarantella in my mother's kitchen when I was seven years old.

There's no more of that kind of curbside delivery today, but in its place there is an array of food shops and restaurants as varied and as sophisticated as anywhere in Europe, anywhere in the world. You lose some things; you gain others. Do you remember the Lieutenant Governor's mansion in Chorley Park? It was a veterans' hospital in the years when I was growing up and my parents used to take us to play in the park sometimes, but I was sure it was a fairy castle, it was so romantic. Then one day it was suddenly gone and I felt a terrible pang.

But around that same time my parents started taking us for excursions over to the island, a tradition that I've continued with my own children, piling our bikes on to the Ward's Island ferry and cycling along the southside boardwalk all the way to Hanlan's Point, stopping off for a game of Frisbee in the middle and listening to picnics in a dozen languages.

I'm a real downtowner. I've always lived within a mile or two of the Park Plaza. Over the years I've added new parts of the city to my regular haunts, areas like the Danforth and the St Lawrence Market area, Harbourfront, College and Clinton. All those other areas "out there" were just the suburbs, as far as I was concerned, until family members started moving, one to Etobicoke, one to East York, another to Scarborough. I started to realize when I went to visit them that they didn't all live their lives yearning for Yonge and Bloor the way I did. They all had their own town centres and malls and areas where they liked to drive you around in December to show you the beautiful Christmas lights, their own local newspapers and churches and charity drives and neighbourhood associations.

This became even clearer to me when my oldest son started playing select hockey in the north Toronto league, which meant me becoming intimately acquainted with just about every hockey rink from Lawrence Avenue north to Lake Simcoe. I remember one arena, in the city of York, where we felt like we had stepped back four decades into the 1950s. I remember another in North York where the hockey rink shared the arena with the bocce courts, where older generations of Italian men came to play and drink espresso. I remember another arena in East York that had a beautiful handmade quilt on the wall, designed and made by Central American immigrants to Toronto — it was in squares — describing the process of becoming a Canadian citizen.

What all these places have in common, I believe, is that they truly belong to their citizens, to the people who

live in them, through a system of local government that they freely elect, manageable enough in size that they can know and reach their school trustees when they need them. Decisions do not get made in these cities until they have gone through a democratic, consultative process with the people who live there. No one in this province — not here, not in the 905 area, not in Windsor or Elora or Ottawa or Kingston or North Bay — voted to take that process away from the people.

We've created some wonderful things in Toronto: Massey Hall, the Harbourfront Centre for arts and recreation, the CNE, the beautiful network of walkways through the ravines and the Don Valley. We've created some awful things as well: Roy Thomson Hall, the Harbourfront towers that block the lake, the SkyDome, the Gardiner Expressway. The point is that we created them all. We did it, making decisions through our elected representatives, so we get to glory in the achievements and we have to take responsibility for the failures. That's how democracy works, and I sincerely hope it's how it will continue to work in this province.

0920

I disagree with every single aspect of the new legislation the government is trying to introduce: the megacity, the trusteeship, the transition team, the downsizing of the school boards and the contempt the government is showing for them, and of course the downloading of welfare and social housing costs on the municipalities. But I am grateful to this government for one thing: It has wakened us all up. It's been said before, but it has never been truer than today in Ontario: The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. I intend to remain vigilant until this government comes to its senses and restores to Ontarians the democratic rights and freedoms that all Canadians, including all of you in this room, I'm sure, love and cherish. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Drainie. We have about a minute and a half for Mr Silipo.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Ms Drainie, my favourite dance is the tarantella, so maybe we can find an occasion, if it's not being too forward.

But let me pick up on the more serious point you made. I find amazing your recounting of what makes this for you, very much following from the previous speaker also, the great city it is. It's that sense that change, as you said, will continue to happen, needs to continue to happen, but the way that change has to happen is in a way which involves people in those decisions and in those discussions, not in the unilateral way Mike Harris and his government are behaving.

One of the things we are continuing to see, even as we are sitting here — yesterday, as these hearings were continuing, I was in another committee room, dealing with the proposal from this government around the referendum process it wants to put in place to cover the whole province. Yet they continue to say they won't heed the referendum process and the referendum vote in Metropolitan Toronto that's taking place now. What's your reaction to that?

Ms Drainie: This is news to me. I wasn't aware that the Ontario government was planning a referendum. On what?

Mr Silipo: No, they're not planning a referendum; they're planning to put in place a referendum law that would cover the process in the future. But of course they're saying it shouldn't apply in this case, because this is too complicated an issue, it's not the kind of issue you should put to referendum. There are about 55 different arguments they put about why it doesn't make sense.

Ms Drainie: It's a very selective use of a process, isn't it? We can all play that game, but basically it should be the same strokes for all the folks.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Drainie, for coming forward this morning and making your presentation.

BRIAN MEESON

The Chair: Would Brian Meeson please come forward. Good morning, Mr Meeson. I know you've been back there for a little bit, so welcome to the committee. As you probably heard, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation. At the end of your presentation, if there's any time remaining, I'll ask the government caucus to ask any questions.

Mr Brian Meeson: Thank you very much. Before I begin, I must add something to Ms Drainie's love of the island. I think you will recall that there was a long fight to ensure that the citizens had a right to live on the island. It was the intent of large government to overrule that right. It was only the will of the people, fighting on their own, with the support of local municipalities, that ensured that the island would remain a viable community, cared for by the people for the benefit of all the people in the city, and not just for the benefit of those who wished to play golf.

I have requested to appear before this committee because no other avenue is available to me to express my response to Bill 103. My elected MPP does not reply to any correspondence. My elected MPP has not appeared at any public meeting in his ward, that I'm aware of. The Premier of Ontario does not reply to any correspondence. My right to influence the actions of my municipal councillor is cancelled by his being arbitrarily placed in trusteeship. The trustees have been instructed not to communicate with me or the public. My right to appeal this multilevel and unilateral disfranchisement in the courts is denied by article 12 of Bill 103.

Above all, my capacity to think clearly and address this bill simply has been undermined by the bill's being bundled with a dozen other measures that directly relate to it and cannot be separated from it.

I want to assure the committee that what I say is not part of an orchestrated campaign, as Minister Leach has suggested. It expresses, I hope with some force and sincerely, with no offence, a personal reaction after reading this bill carefully. I am not a lawyer, but I have difficulty in reading the wording of Bill 103 as a guarantee of ordinary democratic rights. Indeed, certain clauses lead me to the sense that the bill violates my rights as a Canadian and those of my fellow citizens.

Beyond the generally arbitrary and assumptive nature of its provisions, there are three specifics which grant extraordinary powers to the minister and his appointees, powers that usurp individual rights:

(1) The power granted to both the minister-appointed trustees and the minister-appointed transition team is placed beyond the reach of the judiciary. Such bypassing of the courts might be justified in a democracy in time of war or dire emergency. When such conditions clearly do not exist, such appropriation of powers must be challenged as a shift towards tyranny.

(2) The trustees are granted the right to operate outside the limits of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, as also will the transition team.

(3) Both ministerially appointed bodies are granted the power to violate the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

With such provisions, the minister and his appointees are placed beyond the law. The ultimate authoritarian twist is spelled out in clause 25. Here the minister grants himself the power to seek a court order to enforce any part of the act. At the same time, the act bars a citizen from recourse to a court to seek redress for any violation to democratic rights committed by the minister or his appointees. The most obvious redress any citizen would seek is for the disempowerment of those elected representatives who actually do respond to communications, namely, municipal aldermen and councillors.

As an ordinary citizen, I cannot accept the supplanting of those who represent me and whose powers are designed, as in any effective democracy, to exert checks and balances on other levels of government, and on people who are responsible to nobody but the minister who appointed them. My opposition is to trustees appointed by orders in council, to a transition team appointed by orders in council, and by restrictive impositions forced on elected councils by ministerial fiat. In effect, such appointees serve at the whim of the minister and cabinet and are neither responsive nor responsible to the people. They are simply not accountable.

My determination to take action is not founded on selfishness. I agree that there must be changes and that they may not be to my liking. I am compelled to act because this bill attacks a deeper sense of what democracy and community mean to me. I believe that a successful community is built on the desires and efforts of each person in that community. The smaller the community, the more the competing desires and efforts can be balanced and coordinated.

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Because Ontario's cities have been built from small political units in which all citizens have a direct voice, they have a strength and effectiveness that make them, and pre-eminently the municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto, the envy of the world. Their success is their size. That size allows them to be open, responsive and efficient. On these three counts, they equal any city of comparable size. On all three counts, they significantly outperform any larger city in the world. With such small political units is built a city that is genuinely world-class.

This model is regarded as inefficient by a government that refuses to listen to any version of common sense but its own. Its own ideal models, New York and Chicago, are by any measure vastly less efficient. I ask the committee to name a local government in Ontario that has significantly failed to operate within budget constraints.

By way of comparison, I ask them to name any other level of government in this country that exhibits similar fiscal efficiency. Then I ask them to look at the sad fiscal and social record of New York and Chicago.

There appears to be nothing in the idea of amalgamation that could not be more easily accomplished by means other than fiat. Some other, and hidden, agenda must be driving the unseemly haste to scramble this bill into law. Regardless of what agenda pushes its implementation, two assumptions underlying it I feel are deeply subversive.

The first is that change imposed with such violence and haste as proposed can in fact be achieved without increased cost. The implementation of this bill, if passed without amendment, and significant amendment, will I believe trigger huge social resistance and cost overruns that have not been factored in because they are not even contemplated.

The second and more dangerous assumption is that there is only one right model. From the government point of view, its must be the right one. Why? Apparently because every report and expert has testified that it is wrong. But because the government holds the power, it presumes that it has the nod from God — the right divine of kings to govern wrong — and therefore needs no help from others.

Ultimately, this bill is not about amalgamation; it is about power and the authoritarian misuse of power to grab more power. A government that sets an example of violent and authoritarian behaviour sets the standard of behaviour for those it governs.

I am no more nor less than any person in this room. Each of us has been enormously privileged to grow in a democratic society. I think we would all probably agree that a democratic society is a collection of human beings held together by political laws which ensure their freedom from arbitrary restrictions.

One fundamental right underpins democracy. It is a simple tenet: Humans have the right to be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to something else. When they are treated merely as means, they can be overridden, as they are in this bill. When they can be treated with contempt, something is seriously skewed.

I ask you to join with me in consulting our consciences. When we consult our consciences, we have a sense of what is true. Then we'll begin to see this bill for what it is: a disregard for that tenet, or put more bluntly, a Fascist act.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen.

You've effectively used up your 10 minutes, sir. Thank you for coming forward this morning and making a presentation.

BARRY LIPTON

The Chair: Barry Lipton, please. Good morning, Mr Lipton, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Barry Lipton: Thank you. I'm a heavy-construction worker here in Toronto and I'm also certified under the occupational health and safety laws of this province. I have worked on the Gardiner Expressway rehabilitation and also on the subway.

I would like to focus the first part of my presentation on part of the hidden cost that this government is planning for the new megacity of Toronto. There is a cost that so far has not been alluded to by anyone, as far as I know. I do not think anyone at the municipal level has considered the cost of downloaded workers' compensation cases on to welfare rolls due to Bill 99, which is currently before the House. The government is about to change the way many injured workers' benefits are paid. They are going to transfer many of them from workers' compensation to the general welfare and family benefits.

Already there are around 6,000 cases where inadequate WC benefits must be supplemented by welfare, so the municipal property taxpayer is already subsidizing companies with bad safety records. Under Bill 99, literally thousands more will be added to the welfare rolls, with 50% of the cost downloaded to the municipalities. This will occur in several ways.

Almost twice as many injured workers are being denied benefits in 1996 than were in 1991. These denied workers go directly on general welfare and family benefits. This number will grow with the destruction of workers' health and safety by the Harrisites and the increased claim denial rate by the WCB.

There is a ticking time bomb that the Harrisites have left for the municipalities. Over 50,000 workers are on permanent disability benefits which up until now have been fully indexed. Their pensions are being de-indexed by Bill 99 and slowly over the next 10 years the municipalities will find that their family benefit caseloads will explode by up to 50,000 families. This is a nice gift to the Harrisite corporate friends, paid for by the municipal property taxpayers. This is only one reason I am totally against the proposed amalgamation of the seven municipalities that compose the present Metro Toronto.

Why is this government hell-bent in its plans to destroy the economic engine of Canada? I see three basic reasons for the course of action proposed by the Harrisites:

(1) To pay for the 30% provincial income tax cut for the rich, they have to steal at least \$1 billion from the property taxpayers of Metro Toronto.

(2) Most of the open and vocal opposition to the Harrisite agenda comes from the urban area of Toronto. Harris said this past weekend at the Big Brothers Bowlerama that he was doing this to silence the voice of the lefties in the city of Toronto.

(3) The government's neo-con agenda calls for the withdrawal from and the destruction of social services. They will do this by downloading them to the level of government that is least able to pay. This will absolve the Harris government of responsibility for killing these programs. Services will wither and die at the municipal level.

The Harrisite welfare policy is the welfare policy of the last Depression, the same policy that led to the bankruptcies of municipalities across Ontario. It was the welfare policy of charging the poor with vagrancy, beating them with clubs and escorting them to the edge of the municipality. It was the policy of barbed-wire camps for the poor in Canada. Read your history.

I find the emasculation of the democratically elected municipal councils and school boards and the forced

amalgamation of Metro Toronto by this government the most repugnant part of this government's plans.

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I want to read you a quote: "There is no cost for a municipality to maintain its name and identity. Why destroy our roots and pride? I disagree with restructuring because it believes that bigger is better. Services always cost more in larger communities. The issue is to find out how to distribute services fairly and equally without duplicating services." This is a quote of Mike Harris in the Fergus-Elora News-Express of September 24, 1994.

Those who complain about the expense of democracy do not know its true cost. Let them visit the cenotaphs; let them visit the Canadian war cemeteries in Hong Kong, Italy, France, Belgium and Holland. Then let them complain. Those who complain do not deserve to live in a democracy.

My father volunteered for service in the Royal Canadian Air Force in October 1939 to defend democracy against a foreign totalitarian regime. My mother and four uncles were also volunteers. I can do no less than to defend democracy from its enemies here in Ontario. The imposition of the trustees, the transition team and a handpicked bureaucracy smacks of the imposition of the government of Vichy, France. Those who collaborate with this anti-democratic process deserve the same respect as the Pétain regime.

The government has shown its contempt for the Parliament of this province and its citizens. The ministers of this government have continued to tell the citizens that their taxes will not go up and their services will be more efficiently delivered. The citizens already are paying more than a thousand new user fees. The government shows its contempt for the citizenry by assuming that they are stupid sheep and that the citizens cannot tell when their services are going down and their taxes are going up.

There will be a real citizens' response to this course of action by this government. It will be the citizens giving themselves their own tax relief. This government has set the stage for a tax strike. The citizens will not pay their taxes to a government that has lost its legitimacy by suspending the democratic rights of over two million citizens. No taxation without representation.

What do the small shopkeepers have to lose by withholding both their property tax and PST payments? Nothing. They have the choice of going bankrupt by paying these increased taxes or fighting this government. The same goes for all citizens. The withholding of provincial income tax and property tax will be but one response to this government's actions.

In closing, I would like to suggest to the government to withdraw its ill-conceived plans for amalgamation and entanglement. The government should put in place a constituent assembly drawn from the elected representatives and citizens of the entire GTA and Metro areas. This assembly would utilize all the studies about governance in this area, taking all viewpoints into account, and come to a consensus. A constituent assembly worked to develop a new Constitution for the new South Africa and it could be used to develop a working governance system for over four million people here in Ontario.

If a democratic solution to this crisis is dismissed by this government, Harris will bear the responsibility for destroying civil society in Ontario.

I left Saskatchewan in 1988 to come to Ontario. At the time I left there was an arrogant Tory government in power there. We have all seen the results of a government that was arrogant and held its citizens in contempt. I see history judging this government and its members just as harshly. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr Lipton, you've also effectively used your time for your presentation, but thank you for coming forward and making your presentation this morning.

JOAN FORGE

The Chair: Would Joan Forge please come forward. Good morning, Ms Forge.

Ms Joan Forge: Thank you. My great-grandmother was born in 1844 in the village of Yorkville. My mother was born in 1896 in the town of York. Both Yorkville and York were incorporated into the city of Toronto, and that's where I was born, in 1924. So you see, I'm a Torontonians through and through.

When I was a kid, Toronto was a staid, white-bread city, and spaghetti only came out of a can. They called it Hogtown back then, and now it's composed of five cities and a borough, each distinct in its own way. My city has become a vibrant, multicultural metropolis, and I'm very proud of it.

Bill 103, the megacity bill, is a flagrantly undemocratic piece of legislation which would remove local control from our local governments.

Proponents of amalgamation think it would be beneficial because money would be saved. But will money be saved?

Ron Hikel, a partner in KPMG — I'm sure he has been quoted several times already — the management consulting firm which was commissioned by the Harris government to prepare a study of the economics of amalgamation, told a news conference at Queen's Park that there has been no amalgamation of which he was aware that would demonstrate the certainty of savings in Metro Toronto.

Professor Andrew Sancton, an expert on municipal government with the University of Western Ontario, points out that the academic literature is unanimous: Amalgamation always raises the cost of government.

Furthermore, the cost of government increases with the size of the amalgamated city. Wendell Cox, a US author and consultant with international experience in designing legislation, gives us some interesting statistics: Cities with populations of more than one million spend 21% more per capita than those with populations from 500,000 to one million, and they spend 18% more than cities with populations from 100,000 to 500,000. These facts were drawn from the US Census Bureau. Mr Cox says:

"In theory, savings should occur when bureaucracies are combined. In practice, however, such savings never occur.

"One problem is that administrative costs account for only about 15% of the cost of government. Even if you cut administrative costs 20% by eliminating excess bureaucrats, you've still only cut the overall budget by 3%.

John Barber writes in the *Globe and Mail* that any operational efficiencies of amalgamation will almost certainly be eaten up by demands to equalize varying salary and service levels across Metro. Given the nature of politics, that means raising salary and service levels to the highest standard rather than reducing them to the lowest.

Indianapolis, Indiana, is the only major US city to undergo a forced amalgamation in this century. An article in *National Geographic*, entitled *Indianapolis: City on the Rebound*, describes a street party in a downtown neighbourhood. The purpose of the street party was to raise money to replace sidewalks in the neighbourhood. Street parties to raise money for sidewalk repair? Is that what we want for Toronto? Will Toronto suffer the same fate? Will we amalgamate only to find that megacity is a dismal failure? Let us hope wisdom will prevail.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Will you receive questions from the government caucus, starting with Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Thank you, Ms Forge, for coming today to make your presentation. As somebody with such a long family history in Toronto, I have to wonder, given that your family has seen well over a dozen expansions of what was originally called Toronto in that time period, the boundaries have gone from something that was only a few blocks square to a city of 660,000. In every one of those cases it was merely moving out the boundaries of the city of Toronto. You may recall that in 1950 the city of Toronto applied to the Ontario Municipal Board to annex basically all of what we know today as Metro Toronto. That's what the municipal government of the city of Toronto wanted to do 47 years ago.

I have to ask you a question. What has changing the artificial political boundaries done to negatively impact the Toronto we live in today? There have been over a dozen so-called amalgamations in the past.

Ms Forge: I don't think we're talking about boundaries. I don't think it really matters how large the boundaries are, as long as each of the individual cities and boroughs inside those boundaries have a say in what's going on.

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Mr Gilchrist: Okay. Let's look at this, Ms Forge, because again, in the same time period in which you've been an adult in Toronto, we've had towns like Weston absorbed by the city of York against their will at the time, but now obviously an integral and still-thriving community. Leaside didn't want to become part of East York. Had all those local resistances to change been adhered to, we'd still have 13 different communities here and you'd have things as small as Mimico and New Toronto.

Let's leave aside Metro Toronto as a government; that's gone too. If we look at this as nothing more than the boundaries of the city of Toronto being changed to incorporate a larger area, how would that in any way reflect on the culture or the lifestyle of any community within that area?

Ms Forge: I don't know that it would reflect so much on the lifestyle. The question is, are those people going

to be adequately represented in an amalgamated Toronto? I don't think they are.

Mr Gilchrist: That's a good question. Let me ask you, do you believe that representation by population is fair, that each of us should have more or less an equal vote when we go?

Ms Forge: That's the whole basis of democracy, isn't it?

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you. You may or may not be aware that right now — I'll let you put the adjectives to it, but I know we could agree that a lack of action on the part of politicians in the last number of decades has led to a variance where some councillors are elected by less than half the number of voters than other councillors within the same city. In my city of Scarborough, for example, some councillors are elected by 24,000 people and others happen to represent 60,000. They keep getting re-elected, so clearly they're doing a good job.

Would you not agree with us and with the mayors, who in their own report said they believed they could go down to 48 councillors simply by coming to a far fairer averaging of the number of constituents served? Would you not agree with that goal as well?

Ms Forge: I think it has some merit.

Mr Gilchrist: Let me just say to you that by doing that, you wind up with a population that's about 30% smaller than what a Metro councillor represents today. Considering that Metro spends three quarters of all the money, I think a case can be made that if a Metro councillor can represent 70,000 and the new councillors will represent barely 50,000, access to our local politicians will not only be improved but it's certainly doable because the Metro councillors have been doing it now for nine years, as directly elected.

Ms Forge: It all boils down to, will they be properly represented? I'm not entirely sure they will be.

Mr Gilchrist: I'm confident we'll still get good people running.

The Chair: We've come to the end of the 10 minutes. Thank you very much, Ms Forge, for coming forward and making your presentation today.

JOHN FOX

The Chair: Would John Fox please come forward. Good morning, Mr Fox, and welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes this morning to make your presentation.

Mr John Fox: So little time and so much to say. I've already learned a lot sitting in the room today, and I hope I'm not alone.

My name is John Fox. I'm a lawyer in Toronto. I live in the city of York. I've read Bill 103 in light of the transfer of responsibilities the government is proposing between it and the municipalities. My conclusion is that Bill 103 is a flawed piece of legislation and, together with that redistribution of responsibilities, is a potentially devastating combination of legislation to the city of Toronto.

I'd like to make three recommendations to the committee this morning: first with respect to public consultations

on the megacity, second with respect to the danger of downloading and, third, with respect to the importance of local democracy to this city.

First, the need for public consultation: One of the mandates the bill gives to the transition team is to hold public hearings on the functions to be assigned to the neighbourhood committees and on the rationalization of services across the new city.

Generally speaking, if I can be so bold as to reword that, it is to say that the transition team will consider local governance and who should best perform what task. It's an excellent idea and others have had it as well, the Golden and Crombie reports being products of similar ideas. However, it seems to me that kind of consultation should take place before the megacity legislation becomes law, for the following reasons:

First of all, consultations may give the government some better Toronto-specific data on the costs of amalgamation. The speaker before me outlined to you some of the evidence which has come through in the papers regarding the costs of amalgamation, and the conclusion for most of us is that the majority of this evidence indicates that there are no guaranteed savings coming out of this amalgamation.

Second, such consultations could let you know which services in particular could be profitably amalgamated without incurring those costs.

Finally, the effect of representation could also be reviewed. As you know, we've heard a lot about numbers in terms of dollars, but a democratic institution isn't measured only by the efficiency with which it uses its resources but also by how well it can respond to its constituents. It is trite to say that the better the ratio between representative and represented, the more efficiently it can respond.

My first recommendation, therefore, is that public consultation should occur on the rationalization of services before this bill becomes law, not after this bill becomes law.

I want to turn to the dangers of downloading. I know it is not the subject of Bill 103, but I believe they are inexorably linked; in fact I can only understand Bill 103 and in particular the haste with which it is being brought forward in the context of the downloading of services because it is only that downloading which, to my mind, generates the need for an immediate megacity.

Let me review my reasoning with you and why I believe this is a mistake.

It would be a standard reprise of most urban planners and economists that income redistribution programs should not rely on municipal funding. Municipalities are small jurisdictions relying on property taxes for income. It stands to reason that the smaller the jurisdiction, the more precarious the funding. For example, if my apartment building began redistributing income among its tenants, it's clear who would stay and who would leave. Similarly, the logic can be applied to the municipal level: As the demand for soft services increases, those who pay for them — businesses and property taxpayers — are tempted to leave.

The cost of these programs to municipalities depends on the number of its citizens relying on social services,

and this government has acknowledged that. It stands to reason that Toronto, with a high proportion of the province's welfare bill and a high number of its senior citizens living within its border, will be hard hit. In the event of a recession, the effect is evidently amplified.

I can't believe that the government could proceed with the downloading without the amalgamation, because cities like Toronto and York, with even higher per capita proportions of seniors, of children in need of subsidized care and of welfare recipients, would have difficulty almost immediately dealing with their new responsibilities. The megacity will last longer. It has a broader tax base and it will assume any surpluses in the current municipal treasuries.

The combination of legislation brings forward a highly disturbing scenario to my mind, that is, that at some point the megacity will find itself caught between its taxpayers and its needy, caught between a decision between megataxes and mega-despair. You will have to resolve that. The potential damage to Toronto's social and economic viability and fabric are incalculable at this time.

Let me summarize. I want to be plain. I'll join my voice to the metropolitan board of trade. The downloading of income distribution programs to the municipal level is a mistake. I recommend that you do not proceed with that.

Finally, I want to turn to local democracy in Toronto. When I go around to my friends and even other parts of the country, other countries, very few people object when I say that Toronto is one of the best cities in the world. It is safer, it is cleaner, it is a great place to live; it has great restaurants and all kinds of great things going for it.

But it didn't necessarily start that way. Since its inception, the citizens have been trying to improve it and continue to do so. Those improvements have come from debates in city halls, from arguments around dinner tables, the normal way in which democratic societies evolve. We're still looking for ways to improve ourselves and I think the Golden and Crombie reports set out a pretty good blueprint for how to do that.

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In my view, however, Bill 103 does not respect those traditions. It places elected representatives under a trusteeship as though they're not to be trusted, as though those who elected them cannot be relied upon to elect competent representatives. It leaves the basic organizational structure of the megacity in the hands of the transition team, not just its organizational structure but its bureaucracy as well, as though those who were elected to deliver municipal services should have no say in the future development of Toronto.

Finally, the government proposes to ignore municipal referenda as though the citizenry itself should be blocked out of contributing to this discussion.

In my view, Toronto should continue to develop as it was before Bill 103 was brought in. Amalgamation, whether to one city or four, should be considered in light of the recommendations of the two reports which preceded this bill and should take place commensurate with the creation of a body to coordinate regional issues across the GTA, complete with its own set of rules and responsibilities. The realignment of governance in Toronto does

need not to take place at the expense of Toronto's tradition of participatory local democracy.

Thus, my third recommendation: The amalgamation of Toronto should be reconsidered, taking into account the two previous reports and the results of municipal referenda. The amalgamation should be completed, if at all, within the context of an overall GTA restructuring which will involve input from local politicians and interested citizens.

I want to leave with one parting comment, and that is this: You, the government, are proposing to change one of the best cities in the world, in terms of its structure and in its responsibilities, in the face of evidence which should tell you that this is a mistake. If you proceed, if you go this route in the face of all this the evidence and in the face of those who sit in this chair and tell you it's a mistake, I want to tell you that you will be held responsible for the results.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Fox. Mr Colle, you have about a minute and a half.

Mr Colle: As you know, Mr Fox, some of the cheerleaders for the megacity are saying you need a megacity to handle the provincial downloading of social services. You can't have the province unload these services and have the cities survive; therefore, you need megacity to make this change the province is undertaking work. How would you respond to that?

Mr Fox: The point that I was trying to make, Mr Colle, was that the megacity is a necessary part of that downloading. It in essence buys time for the government before the full implications of downloading will be witnessed, whereas if the amalgamation does not take place, the evidence in Toronto and perhaps our own city of York would manifest itself much earlier.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Fox, for coming forward this morning and making your presentation to us.

ELIZABETH LINES

The Chair: Would Elizabeth Lines please come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

Ms Elizabeth Lines: I hope my voice will hold up. To the Chair and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Lines and I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

In terms of my background, I grew up in Etobicoke and have been a resident of the west end of the city of Toronto for all of my adult life. Like many others coming before this committee, I am a product of a strong and capable public school system and have attended two of our local universities, York and the University of Toronto. I make my living engaged in a variety of research and writing activities across this city.

I'll be speaking as a resident and worker in the city of Toronto, but I want to say, in terms of the other Metro municipalities, that what in part makes them great is the diversity we have both within and among such municipalities.

I would also add by way of further introduction that, like some others appearing before you, this is the first time I have felt compelled to become politically active in such a direct and personal way, including requesting an

appearance before a legislative committee such as this. In the final analysis, just as the personal is political, so too the political is personal.

I have spent some time questioning my own minimal political involvement to date, and I have considered that the notion of complacency, at least in part, can be constructed as a condition born of public trust. While that trust surely has been battered and bruised by the nature of our political process well before now, I would have to say that this fundamental public trust has most definitely now been shattered by the actions of this government in the hearts and minds of many people.

I would like to voice a couple of on-the-ground concerns that I have about amalgamation, since amalgamation seems to be what much of the discussion revolves around, both here and out on the streets, in the press and so forth, and to a degree rightly so. But I will move on from those personal reflections to my real concerns about the entanglement of the concept of amalgamation within Bill 103 and some entanglements within the concept of amalgamation itself.

First, in terms of my personal experience and life in this city, I am proud to be able to say that I have had the good fortune of working with both the Toronto Board of Education and the city of Toronto department of public health on several projects over recent years. They are both recognized internationally as leaders in their respective fields for their innovative, progressive and community-sensitive initiatives.

I have been able to witness and participate first hand in strong, trusting, and cooperative relationships that have been carefully developed and maintained together by the various communities, city or board staff and elected officials, that allow for a sharing of expertise and resources directed towards the development of practices and programs that are appropriate and can make a difference. I would be very concerned that should the city be amalgamated and, as well, our board of education dissolved, with our locally accountable and responsive councillors and trustees being removed from our reach, not to mention the many other barriers that would emerge, much of this good work would have to be abandoned. Yet my strong feeling is that in the long run, what is a loss to the city, what is a loss to individuals or groups is in the end a loss to us all on many levels.

By the way, I do realize that Bill 103 is not about education, but Bill 104 is, and it too is being rammed through the Legislature as we speak, before we can catch our breath.

"Oh, look, what was that? Was it a bird? Was it a plane?" No, just another superbill winging its way from out of some dark recess into our lives to forever change them, without our input or consent, moving at such a speed that unless you have the time to devote your life to monitoring the daily activities of this government, your capacity for even any attempt to participate or question is absolutely impossible. Turn around and, bang, it's another one.

I'm not sure if there are any contexts in which such tactics are really called for at this point in what I thought we could call civilized society, but I know for sure that the context of democratic governance is not one of them.

This is of course one of the ways in which this government is consistently in contempt of its citizens.

Finally, to return just briefly to my on-the-ground concerns about Bill 103, in conjunction with the other components of the mega-package, I worry too that the community where I have lived for over 20 years, Bloor West Village, will go into a severe tailspin. The commercial strip, which was I believe the first business improvement area of the city and has served as a model to others, that has grown to be so vital that even now, due to its popularity, the leasing costs for retail space are prohibitive to many, will be at risk of reverting to its pre-BIA state when more and more businesses cannot afford to operate here. While we are on the subject, what would happen to the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas under amalgamation?

Now Bill 103 and amalgamation: I would like to turn to some of the conceptual issues that I see surrounding the bill, but I will tell you right now that I think the bill is a tragedy, that it must be immediately and completely withdrawn. But I feel it is most unfortunate that Bill 103 and amalgamation are being viewed as one and the same thing.

I will approach the topic of the bill now from the perspective of entanglement, that very *de rigueur* concept of the day. To my mind, there are two very distinct issues that have become entangled in this bill. Certainly others have addressed these components, but the issues still tend to get caught up in one another. I'm coming to think that they must be viewed separately to make sense of either the bill or amalgamation. I will address each of these issues in turn.

1010

One issue — supposedly the substantive issue — is the amalgamation of our Metro municipalities. Never mind that this idea came out of nowhere, that not only was it not part of the government's platform or mandate, but the Premier and other PCs, notably Joyce Trimmer's task force, which included Derwyn Shea, my MPP, spoke against such an idea. Oh well, so what?

Now never mind that well-informed opinion and experience does not recommend or may actually warn against amalgamation, especially as a standalone reform. Never mind that amalgamation not only won't save us money but will cost us, not only in dollars but in the time and energy that will have to be devoted to what I perceive to be an unnecessary exercise premised on an abuse of power and for which we will all pay dearly in numerous ways for a long, long time to come.

No, never mind all of that. Instead of carrying on with arguments against amalgamation — we've heard them, we know them; it does make no sense — I want to get on to another conceptual entanglement.

Even within this issue of the arguments for amalgamation alone, the government, in defending this rather hollow concept, repeatedly entangles issues of service provision with issues of representation and governance. We know that service provision and/or improvement of service provision can be achieved without the dismantling of local government, and that distinction still often gets blurred.

It's much safer for the provincial government to keep these two issues entangled, because how could they come out and argue directly against people's rights as individuals and communities to have elected representatives? How could they say, "You don't deserve to be adequately represented"? Does the government think that if it keeps talking about fire departments, the citizens won't realize they are being robbed of their voice and their representatives and a say in their own future? This is the case right now under Bill 103, and it will remain so throughout the process that Bill 103 sets in motion.

I'm not really aware of any evidence or solid pro-amalgamation arguments as a standalone entity. It doesn't make sense. That's the reaction people have. So what is it actually all about?

I have heard the minister speak of Bill 103, that is, amalgamation, as the "foundation" bill, and of course it is the bill that opens the door to MVA and downloading, so in that sense it certainly is just a beginning. But if we think about a real foundation for the building of a bigger and better city, isn't there usually a fairly comprehensive plan in place before one lays a foundation? Otherwise, how do you know what size or shape or type of foundation you need if you don't know what you're building? But here we've seen no serious plan, no full plan for this great city. This is just another way in which I see the bill as not being about amalgamation. That is, it's not about building a better city, it's not about building a city at all; it's about something quite different and something quite sinister. I think now that the bill is a complete ruse.

So now, Bill 103 versus amalgamation —

The Vice-Chair (Ms Julia Munro): I must point out that you have approached the 10 minutes. Could you wrap up in a few moments, please.

Ms Lines: In my opinion, the essence of Bill 103 is the breach of public trust, through the process through which this bill has come to be, also through the hostile takeover of our municipalities by the province, an action ensconced in the bill.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. You have exceeded your time. We appreciate your coming here today.

MARY HAY

The Acting Chair: Is Mary Hay here? Good morning, Ms Hay.

Ms Mary Hay: I appreciate the opportunity to speak here today. I would like to say that I'm not here as a member of "John Sewell's group." I spoke at the first opportunity at city hall when this bill was first proposed. I have attended a couple of meetings because it is one clearinghouse for an astonishing array of people from across the city of Toronto who are profoundly upset by the ramifications of this bill. I am appalled by what Mike Harris's group is proposing for the future of the city.

I'm here today as a 45-year citizen of the city of Toronto. I'm here as a mother of two sons who I hope can continue to live here in a city which is still a livable, exciting, vibrant place to be. I have very, very severe qualms about the city that they will be growing up into as adults if this bill goes through.

I'm also here as someone who has been actively involved in community issues and in the type of careful local attention that is paid in the city of Toronto to planning issues in a very unique city which needs that type of fine-tuning at the local level.

As both a mother and a citizen and as someone who has been actively involved in community groups, I'm concerned most about two things here. One of them is what I see ultimately as the contempt of a government that would foist this type of legislation upon the citizenry and then say they will not even listen to the voice of the people when they do express it within a referendum. I'm also profoundly concerned about the ramifications of the bill, because Toronto is a city that works particularly well within the North American context. We are, as *Fortune* magazine and many others have pointed out, a model for the rest of the North American urban experience.

I'm going to talk not so much about those issues in the broader sense, because certainly many, many people have addressed them magnificently. I'd like to talk about it within the context of my experience with an umbrella organization which has given me their full approval to speak within that context today.

I've been involved with an organization called the Toronto Waterfront Coalition, which is an umbrella organization of 21 waterfront-based citizens' and residents' associations. We've been involved for eight years now, and we had our inception through the Crombie commission hearings where we met each other and found that we had many common points of concern and interest in terms of encouraging development of the waterfront that continued to bear in mind people's access to the waterfront, a greening of the waterfront, and productive development. Certainly we are not anti-development, but we know that Toronto has an opportunity to have a waterfront that can be the envy of the world and we want to encourage that type of development.

We have within our membership the most astonishing array of social, economic and political backgrounds that you could possibly imagine, but all of these people who have become involved through these local organizations and have then gone on to speak at committees at the city of Toronto and helped to form policy at the city of Toronto have a profound appreciation for the city they live in. They have taken the time, which is sometimes quite taxing, to get involved in their communities and to help make Toronto the place it is today.

One of the issues we have been involved in is trying to make sure the future of the Toronto Island Airport, otherwise known as the Toronto City Centre Airport, does not include its becoming something that will overwhelm the other uses on the waterfront. Around this issue we circulated a petition. We had, with not that much effort, a snowball effect of people phoning back in wanting new copies of the petition. Over the course of approximately a year, we collected 9,524 signatures on that petition saying that people wanted the size of the airport curtailed so they could continue to enjoy the wonderful resource that the waterfront was.

Those people are from across Metro. They care about a local planning issue, as it's perceived in the city of Toronto, because it has broader ramifications. We have

from that a mailing list of 2,011 people who want to be kept informed on this issue.

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For me it was a revelation. I had somewhat timidly become involved in the issue because I was annoyed by the personal effects it had upon me, but to find that there are that many people willing to commit to getting involved in their neighbourhoods, to coming to committee meetings at the city of Toronto to help form public policy within the city of Toronto, was both a humbling and a very gratifying experience. Toronto has truly committed citizens, and it's because of that that it is still a highly livable city. It's the type of fine-tuning that we've been able to do through the responsiveness of the local government that has allowed the city to be what it is today.

In talking to the other executive members and people within the member organizations of our organization, there was almost unanimous agreement on the fact that what is needed in this city is what many of the advisory panels that the government has consulted and ignored said. People almost unanimously felt that what we need is that GTA governing body and to maintain at least four levels of local government within what is now known as Metro.

I don't wish to be cynical, but cynicism certainly does creep in here. I think it's precisely because of this, because of this act, that pesky citizens in the city of Toronto do get involved and do sometimes object to things that larger bodies or larger interests, or very narrow but powerful interests, want to have happen, that this government wants to eliminate that level of local involvement and local control. It's interesting to watch that they do so with the full encouragement of, for instance, the *Toronto Star*.

I have an anecdotal report that John Honderich was heard to say at a Christmas party in North Toronto, when asked why he was so vociferously in favour of amalgamation, that it's because of the type of stupidity of organizations such as the city of Toronto objecting to jets at the Toronto Island Airport that we want this to go through. That appals me. This has been a public process. The city of Toronto has listened to, and heeded to some extent, the overwhelmingly expressed wishes of the citizens on this. If that level of checks and balances and local planning is demolished, democratic representation within the city of Toronto is essentially over and we will become one of those North American cities that don't even get looked at by *Fortune* magazine and that people will start to flee from.

I'd like my children to be able to live in this city and to have their children in this city, but I am revising that personal hope on my part right now; I'm looking beyond. I don't think the city can afford to have people thinking that way.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. We have about a minute and a half for the NDP caucus.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I want to thank you, Mary, for your presentation. I have to say to you that I'm very gratified to see many citizens like yourself who have come today and yesterday and will be coming to the hearings with a passion for what they feel is going to be deranged as a result of this bill and how that will

affect their own life. So I'm happy that people like yourself are here to make a statement.

Leach said: "Recently, *Fortune* magazine called Toronto the best city in the world to live and work in, but today a city can't just rest on its laurels no matter how high the praise. Given the relentless competition from the global marketplace, Toronto has to move forward just to maintain its current position." He argues that we have the opportunity through this governance structure to save money, remove barriers to growth — I guess the way we're organized is a barrier to growth — and help to create jobs. What is your response to that type of statement?

Ms Hay: I think it has been proven time and again — there are no studies, as we know, that prove that it will save money. I think it's significant that in the issue of the Island Airport, one of the most strongly involved people, who is currently continuing to be involved, although he's been stationed for two years in Mexico City, is a financial analyst. He's a senior partner in a downtown financial firm. He is a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal with small-c conservative leanings. He's lived in a lot of cities around the world. He's lived in Paris, Hong Kong, most of the major cities of the world.

He maintains a residence here in Toronto because this is what he wants to keep as his base, and he's appalled by this proposal. He thinks that this is not progress. He thinks, out there within the larger business community, the city of Toronto does show what big business does want. *Fortune* magazine has not chosen this city accidentally. It is livable. It is affordable. It is going to continue to be a strong business base as well as a place to live. He knows —

The Vice-Chair: I must interrupt you. Your time is up. Thank you very much.

MARIE BAMFORD

The Vice-Chair: Marie Bamford, please. Good morning and welcome to the committee, and you may begin.

Ms Marie Bamford: First I would like to thank the members of the committee for listening today. My name is Marie Bamford. I was born in Toronto and I have lived here all my life. I am the mother of four boys and now live in the upper beach area.

When I first heard that the government of Ontario was considering amalgamating the six municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto, I didn't even take it seriously. So much has been written about the important role that small and effective local government plays in maintaining the strength and vitality of the downtown core that I did not think any government would be senseless enough to press forward with an amalgamation plan. Obviously, I was wrong.

When I heard that our six workable municipalities were to be merged into one monster megacity, I felt physically ill. I couldn't breathe, and since that day I have felt so threatened by Bill 103 that I walk around feeling as though somehow has a knife at my throat.

I love this city. I love Toronto. And I believe, after reading everything that I could on this matter, the Ontario government is going to destroy the heart and soul of this city, and I don't think you care.

Small, accessible local government is what makes Toronto a viable and livable city. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs, the respected author on urban studies, writes: "Planners like to think they deal in grand terms with the city as a whole and that their value is great because they 'grasp the whole picture.' But the notion that they are needed to deal with their city 'as a whole' is principally a delusion.... In truth, because of the nature of the work to be done, almost all city planning is concerned with relatively small and specific acts done here and done there, in specific streets, neighbourhoods and districts.

"To know whether it is done well or ill — to know what should be done at all — it is more important to know that specific locality than it is to know how many bits in the same category of bits are going into other localities and what is being done with them there. No other expertise can substitute for locality knowledge in planning, whether the planning is creative, coordinating or predictive. The invention required is not a device for coordination at the generalized top, but rather an invention to make coordination possible where the need is most acute — in specific and unique localities. In short, great cities must be divided into administrative districts."

In the new megacity, there will be fewer and larger administrative districts. Each councillor will not only have to be familiar with his or her own riding, but will need a far greater knowledge of the whole of the Metro area. Their knowledge will become less detailed and more generalized, which is the opposite of what we need in a local councillor.

In my area of Toronto, our city councillor has a very detailed knowledge of our ward. He is also very accessible. He always returns phone calls promptly and does what he can to help. In contrast, the only time I have called my Metro councillor, he did not call back. I feel a much greater connection to my city government than the Metro government.

1030

I am also concerned that the present small city of Toronto's voice will be lost in the newer larger council. The things that matter, the things that are of importance, all the unique programs that the city of Toronto runs, may not be of equal importance to the new amalgamated council.

I grew up in West Hill in the east end of Scarborough, and I know that the mindset of a person who lives in West Hill is very different from someone who chooses to live in the city. We have different concerns, different needs and a different lifestyle. They would not choose to be regulated to become more like downtown, nor do we want to be regulated to be more like West Hill. Responsive, accessible local governments can better meet the needs of a diverse population. Bill 103 would make municipal government less responsive and less accessible.

I am extremely concerned about the unprecedented powers being given to the trustees and the transition team. The sweeping powers given to the Minister of Municipal Affairs are truly terrifying. Why do we need trustees? Our local governments have not acted irresponsibly. In fact I think the Ontario government will be the one to act irresponsibly and, to prevent that happening, I

think the governments of the six municipalities should move quickly to transfer municipal assets and reserve funds into a trust fund to protect local taxpayers' assets from the government of Ontario. I fear the government is going to seize these moneys and assets to help pay for their promised tax cut — a tax cut that benefits the wealthiest members of our society most.

Another thing I am concerned about is the cost of running for mayor or councillor in a megacity. I think that municipal politics will become blatantly party politics because the cost of running for an election will be prohibitive. This means that councillors will no longer be able to vote to represent their constituent, but will have to take the party line. Inevitably, we will see the disappearance of real representational local democracy. If provincial representatives could vote truly representing their ridings, then Al Leach, Dave Johnson, Isabel Bassett, Derwyn Shea and others would be voting against amalgamation. They would have to do this in order to serve the will of their constituents, the very people who voted them into office.

If reform is needed in government, surely it is at the provincial and federal level because a majority government at that level can become a parliamentary dictatorship if they refuse to really listen to and consult with the opposition parties and the people, the citizens of Ontario.

The municipal level of government is working well as it is. What I would say to the Harris government is: Clean up your own house first and leave our home at city hall alone.

I have sat in this room today and yesterday listening to other citizens of Toronto making their deputations to the committee and I am amazed, pleased and proud of how well informed everyone is. I have learned so much about the history of Toronto, about housing issues, taxation and other urban affairs. The wealth of wisdom and knowledge and creative thought that is being offered to this committee is wonderful.

I hope the government members are listening to these intelligent, thoughtful and often very experienced people, people who have made time to come out and try to stop this government from making a tremendous mistake. Please listen to all these wise people. So much of what I have heard in the past two days of hearings makes profound sense, perhaps even common sense.

Withdraw Bill 103. Begin a new and real consultative process to make legislation that really would make a wonderful city even greater. The people of this city have so much to offer. Listen to them. Stop Bill 103. Don't destroy Toronto.

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): Thank you very much for bringing together a great many of the ideas that have been expressed over the past few days. However, I just wanted your comment on the fact that we're looking at 200 years of a process of amalgamations in this geographic area. People have talked about what Toronto used to be. We've had many people who've talked about how many generations their families have been in Toronto, and certainly I have to say I'm one of those.

It seems to me that we've always seen a process here of communities having to come together for administration, for the service delivery, yet many people have

talked about how community life continues to flourish, the fact that they have very strong community neighbourhoods and so forth.

I just wonder, if you think back on the experience that we have come to at this date, what your comment is in terms of the history, if you like, of amalgamations and the ability of Torontonians to continue their community identity.

Ms Bamford: I think you reach a certain level of diseconomy of scale. When things get too big they stop working, and I think if you do this, you'll reach the point where it's too big and it will stop working.

Mrs Munro: I guess we could argue that might be the case for a country or a province or something like that in terms of —

Ms Bamford: Democracy works best at the lowest level, at the local level, and you lose your voice as it gets higher. We need small, local governments; that's what works.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Munro, and thank you, Ms Bamford, for coming forward this morning.

DEBORAH WHEELER

The Chair: Would Deborah Wheeler please come forward. Good morning, Ms Wheeler, and welcome to the committee.

Ms Deborah Wheeler: Thank you for this opportunity to address you today. Because I am very inexperienced at public speaking, I will be reading the text.

I should first like to mention a few details about myself so that you may understand why I, and others like me, have chosen to take a stand on this issue and to oppose the amalgamation of the six municipalities of Metro Toronto.

I have lived in East York for almost nine years. Two of my sons were born in the borough. My husband is self-employed and our income is less than the average household income. Out of this we pay substantial property taxes, and unlike city of Toronto residents, we must pay for all the recreational activities our children make use of. But we have decided that the benefits of living in the borough are worth it. East York has a family-oriented, small-town feeling. We like that and we don't want to lose it.

I mention these facts because I am sick and tired of hearing any opposition to this bill dismissed as motivated by narrow self-interest, whether of local politicians and bureaucrats afraid of losing their jobs, or of well-off Toronto residents with particular axes to grind. Why is it so difficult for this government to accept that ordinary citizens can be passionately interested in how they are governed and wish to be treated as full partners in the process?

I do not have a low opinion, as this government seems to have, of my elected representatives on East York council. On the contrary, I have a high regard for the contribution they make to our community and believe that, for the most part, they are motivated by a spirit of public service. I am proud of the efficient, responsible leadership Mayor Prue has provided and know that Dave Johnson, the government House leader, gave good service, too, when he was mayor of East York. Under the

existing structure of government, I know that I can count on open access to members of council as well as to school board trustees, and they have proved a valuable resource to me over the years.

Let me tell you about a personal experience that brought home to me one of the more intangible benefits of living in a smaller municipality, the kind of benefit that will be impossible with amalgamation. Some months ago I was with my seven-year-old at the civic centre in the vicinity of the mayor's office and the mayor happened to come out. He invited us into his office where he showed my son the regalia of office and explained the duties of a mayor. That was my son's first lesson in democracy. He was able to put a real and friendly face to the workings of government. Can you imagine such a creative encounter taking place with the mayor of a megacity? I can't.

This ease of access and relative openness of government mean a lot to residents and are worth preserving, it seems to me, even at the cost of some overlap of services. You, members of the committee, must know as well as I do that there is much more to the satisfaction of living in a well-governed community than can be gained by simply focusing on the requirements of bottom-line accountability.

The endless repetition of such catchphrases as "cost-effectiveness," "efficiency," "rationalization," "less government" and "lower taxes" cannot be allowed to drown out the still, small voice of disbelief that says: "Hey, wait a minute. Whose interests do they really have at heart in making these changes?" I believe the real intention of this legislation is not better government for the citizens of Metro, but control by the provincial government of the roughly \$1 billion worth of reserve funds held by the municipalities.

1040

How many people realize that their basic democratic rights are being eroded by this bill? The province has appointed trustees to oversee and if necessary veto the decisions of our elected representatives, and a transition team, again of government appointees, has been given the responsibility of designing our future for us. There is no appeal from their decisions. Their actions are not subject to challenge in the courts. What kind of accountability is that to the taxpayers and voters of Metro? The Premier and his government have made a mockery of my role as a responsible citizen. This is insulting. I feel cheated and I bitterly resent it.

I see that the three major newspapers in Toronto editorially support amalgamation — reason enough for suspicion — as do the Metro board of trade and other representatives of business. I also note that it is only when proposed changes incur the criticism of the business and financial community that any possibility is acknowledged of the government changing its mind. When you add to this the categorical statements of cabinet ministers that it is pointless for municipalities to poll the opinions of their residents because the changes will go ahead anyway, then I must wonder whether this government really cares at all about the views of ordinary concerned citizens.

What is the purpose of these public hearings? The integrity of the whole process is inevitably called into

question. We are being drowned in a tidal wave of legislative changes and there isn't the remotest chance of giving them proper consideration in the allotted time. There are changes in the method of property assessment, there is the consolidation of school boards, there is the transfer of funding and control of education to the province, and the downloading of increased financial responsibility to the municipalities for social assistance, public health and other social services.

Then there is the amalgamation of Metro's municipalities, which is the subject of these hearings. Clearly, it is wrong to consider the restructuring of government in isolation from the reallocation of financial and administrative responsibilities for services. It is not only wrong but wilfully irresponsible, for the consequences of these changes will profoundly affect, for the worse, the economic and social wellbeing of the people of this region.

The government's approach betrays its impatience with the democratic process. Out of its fundamental contempt for the political process, it seeks to substitute managing for governing. Good management is obviously a necessary condition of good government, but by itself can never be enough. The missing ingredient must come from the conviction that one has a voice in decisions affecting the quality of life in one's community. It is the apprehension of losing this voice that accounts for the energy with which so many concerned citizens have mobilized to oppose amalgamation.

The proposed neighbourhood committees are not an adequate answer. These committees, according to the bill, are intended to allow citizens to get involved directly in decisions made by the megacity, but just consider the hurdles that a recommendation from one of these committees will have to negotiate if it needs the approval of the new city. It will first have to get the attention of the elected councillor for the ward in which the committee is located, and there will be several such committees competing for her or his attention. Remember that each ward will be twice the size of existing wards.

The recommendation will then go to its respective community council whose six or seven councillors will be responsible for an area roughly equivalent in size to one of the present municipalities. If it clears that hurdle, it will go to the appropriate special committee of megacity council and then, if approved, to the megacity executive committee. If it clears this committee it will go to the full council of megacity where it will have to compete with the concerns of the other 43 councillors representing, in all, a population 20 times the size of my present municipality.

The purpose of this arrangement, I should remind you, is "to ensure that local voices are heard loud and clear." Anyone who wants us to believe that is either woefully ignorant or terribly cynical.

In offloading so many functions from elected representatives to volunteers — school councils and neighbourhood committees are but the two latest examples — there is the risk of these functions falling under the control of an ever-shrinking pool of volunteers. I work as a volunteer in our school system and I know the demands made of them. If they are preoccupied with these tasks, who will have the energy and interest to attend to other issues of government? Perhaps that is the intent.

To conclude, this last month I have been out on the streets, in the malls and in stores talking with people and encouraging them to think about this bill and to vote in the referendum. From the 300 or more people I have spoken with so far, about two thirds are strongly opposed to amalgamation, some are undecided and only a handful have expressed themselves in favour of it.

The message for this government is clear: Slow down and re-examine your position on both amalgamation and the reallocation of financial responsibilities between the province and municipalities. Lift the present deadline for enactment of Bill 103 and, with the benefit of these hearings to build on, approach the restructuring of Metro government with the same measured care and respect for local differences that you believe to be so important in developing a new, coordinated system of governance for the greater Toronto area.

The Premier, I'm sure, is big enough to accept the embarrassment of admitting to error. It is such a small price to pay for the avoidance of a colossal blunder with fateful consequences for the urban region that our children will inherit. Thank you for listening to me.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Wheeler.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentleman. We've been through the rules before. Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation. You were the closest person yet to 10 minutes flat.

STUART HAYWARD

The Chair: Would Stuart Hayward please come forward. Good morning. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Stuart Hayward: Mr Chairman, members of the committee, I am here today representing myself as a citizen of Etobicoke, Metro and Ontario. I am both pleased and saddened to be here. I am pleased because it means that the mega-bills, in particular Bill 103, have not yet passed. I'm saddened because I know this process is a sham. On Monday all doubt was removed as I watched the opening process on the legislative TV channel. I will be given a hearing but I won't be heard. The majority of the members of this committee are bound not to me as a citizen but to their political party and power.

As I watched the individual presentations on television I became aware that there was little new that I could add to the eloquence of my fellow citizens. Collectively they have said it all, but there are three points I wish to state.

First, I am amazed at how easy it is to strip away democracy. This government was elected to govern by 28% of the populace. They have interpreted this as a mandate to rule. Due process in the Legislature has been curtailed, studies have been fragmented and misused and the experience of other cities and the advice of those whose life work is in this area has been ignored.

We are witnessing the realization of the speculation of authors such as Huxley and Orwell: Newspeak such as "less is more," or to paraphrase a statement by Mr Leach in his opening remarks to this committee, "We will tell them what they want." His version was, "We will look and decide what is best for each region."

The terms of the imposition of trustees and transition teams on our municipalities give appointees and their

provincial masters unbridled power to gut our institutions, steal our reserves and reduce us to serfdom, and also to appoint their cronies to sensitive posts.

I am not a student of these matters but I would like to read to the committee some quotes from one of the greatest centralizers of our time. I think this government is well aware of them.

(1) "All propaganda has to be popular, and has to adapt its spiritual level to the perception of the least intelligent of those towards whom it intends to direct itself."

(2) "The great masses of the people will more easily fall victim to a great lie than a small one."

I will not draw the obvious parallels, but there is one other quote you should hear from the same source: "One should guard against believing the great masses to be more stupid than they actually are."

1050

Recently we had cause to have two home care nurses in our home. As it turned out, both of them had come from Serbia. Mentioning the upheaval in their homeland, I asked them what they thought of what was happening here. They both responded in the same way: "This is the way it started in our country." Such a cycle must not be allowed to play out in this city or in this province, and sooner or later you will listen.

Second, Mr Leach has suggested that we have this one-time opportunity to use the best ideas in government innovation and planning to amalgamate six municipalities into one great city of 2.3 million. He presented it as though it was a great experiment with no chance of failure. But the experiment has already been done, and recently. Lessons have been learned and conclusions made. Professor Michael Keating, writing in the *Globe and Mail*, recently stated:

"[N]obody has seriously argued that economies of scale continue past a population of about half a million. At this point, as Europeans have discovered, you have to put in an additional tier of administration in any case, just to keep the span of control manageable. This additional layer, and the needs of coordination, can make very large governments even more expensive." He goes on to say that the "megacity is at best an irrelevance, a throwback to the 1970s era of 'big is beautiful.'"

Mr Leach has also said that almost three quarters of the amalgamation is already done, that he's just trying to complete the process. Mr Keating has some thoughts on that process as well, and I quote:

"Even in the United Kingdom where local government was devastated in the Thatcher era, the opposition parties are examining the need for new structures for Greater London and the main regional centres. These new metropolitan governments are not about delivering everyday services, a task now seen as better entrusted to a more local level. They are not top-heavy bureaucracies seeking to control local affairs from one central point. Instead, they have light structures and powers tailored to their needs. They are about economic development and planning, infrastructure, integrating the needs of human capital development and training with those of hard services, ensuring coherent development and seeing that the benefits of growth are equally distributed."

He continues about interunit competition but states that the current course will make the problem worse. If Metro needs some fine-tuning, let's get out the piano wrench, not the wrecking ball. There is no rule saying that Canadians must pick up outmoded ideas and implement them just as others are abandoning them. Mr Harris and his caucus are outdated, not those of us fighting for the survival of our community structure.

An anthill will provide a useful analogy. The anthill is made large by the action of many individuals working both together and independently. Several small structures may coalesce to make one large structure, but there is no need for a mega-hill supervisor. There may be several queen ants, not dominating but assisted by all the other ants pursuing their essential job in the community. In contrast, the Egyptian pharaohs, by driving and organizing their human machine, made great pyramids, but they were intended to house the dead.

This is not to say that I believe we, as humans in a large community, do not require some coordination and order in our affairs but that top-down management in all affairs destroys the initiative and innovation that develops great ideas on a small scale before they are applied on a larger scale. With all humility I say to the government, equalize the tax burden in the GTA, don't make it worse. Make us part of the process, not subject to it. These are our cities, with all their warts and their bandages, and we will support you if you show us reason.

My third point refers to the loading of social service costs on to the municipal structure. I would like it to be a different facet of this proposed legislation, one that others have missed. But this sticks under my skin as a particularly inconsistent and ill-conceived idea. If the government really believed that service is better delivered on a centralized basis, why are they going against the pattern on this one issue? Why are they fragmenting a system that is in place and has worked reasonably well? Why is the government willing to take this step against the most vulnerable of its citizens and virtually ensure that there will not be adequate funding throughout Ontario? I am aware that this formula for disaster is couched in another bill, but this feint is easy to spot in the fancy footwork of mega-week.

The creation of a massive social deficit in the name of fiscal responsibility is not in the best interests of the community, nor is it in the interests of that provincial government which should serve that community. Analysis after analysis has shown that the exchange of education tax for a social service tax is going to put a greater tax burden on property, which can only result in poorer service. Quite possibly, subsidized housing and public institutions will be put up for sale. The social deficit thus created will not attract investment, improve our city or contribute to the development of our human capital.

In this topsy-turvy world it seems that you do not need an education to be Minister of Education, nor do you need a social conscience to be minister in charge of societal welfare. You just have to be part of the team.

Mr Chairman, if I have a minute left —

The Chair: We actually don't, Mr Hayward, sorry.

Mr Hayward: I was going to claim it for a minute of silence.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming forward and presenting to the committee today.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen.

HANOCH BORDAN

The Chair: Would Hanoch Bordan come forward. As Mr Bordan is coming forward, I remind members of the audience — I think the clerk spoke to everyone at the beginning — that outbursts from the audience are out of order. We're already a little bit behind time, and I don't want that to affect the amount of time that presenters have to make their presentations. Each time I have to make an announcement like this, it does just that, so I'd appreciate it if you'd not participate in that fashion.

Mr Bordan, welcome to the committee this morning. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

Mr Hanoch Bordan: Thank you for allowing me to come here. Last year my wife and I bought a new house in Toronto — it wasn't really a new house; it was an old house but it's new to us — around the corner from where we used to live, right on the border with East York, where road crews sometimes get a little confused as to who is responsible for what pothole.

We love our house, off the Danforth, close by the subway, and to make it even better we decided to add a sunroom. It took us months to get a Toronto building permit and we complained bitterly about city hall red tape. We are told by our neighbours that it takes half the time to get the same building permit in East York.

Based on our experience, one might conclude that road repair should be centralized while at the same time building permits should be decentralized. Maybe, but I think we would all agree that we need more evidence than that before making such changes.

I delight in making snide comments about city hall bureaucracy and I crack jokes about the border on our property line. If you come over, I'll show it to you. I may even put up a plaque there one of these days. Everybody complains about city hall. It is an old tradition in a free country. But whatever our complaints about city hall, one thing is absolutely clear: The way to make things better is definitely not to burn down city hall, which is what Bill 103 figuratively would do.

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When I appeared here more than a year ago opposing the infamous omnibus bill, I urged Tory parliamentarians to be true to their conservative traditions. I now renew my call. I'm not a politician and I'm not a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, or any political party, but I certainly see merit in preserving that which is worth preserving and at the same changing that which needs change.

There may be value in some of the proposals in Bill 103, but the pity is that this bill seems to have been designed in haste based on the notions of a handful of politicians, bureaucrats and editors. You would think that any truly Conservative government, before revolutionizing how a quarter of the province's population is governed, would allow enough time for detailed discussion of any proposal. A truly Conservative government I

suggest would perhaps issue a discussion paper — and this bill is as good a starting point as any — allow for public debate of several months, come up with a draft and have more public meetings until the bill is put in final form for consideration by the Legislature. Even then there would no doubt be changes.

A truly conservative government, I submit, would have respect for Metro Toronto residents and allow enough time for us to digest the proposed changes and speak on them, not limit people to just 10 minutes, even limiting so prominent a person as Jane Jacobs, that renowned urban expert we are privileged to have in our midst.

A truly conservative government would not make us feel as if we're being governed as part of a colonial empire. We are free people and we may even know what's good for us, and we won't be pushed around.

A truly conservative government would not heap scorn on our local politicians. Aren't you politicians yourselves? Is not politics a noble calling? If it isn't, why do you do it?

I am offended that a conservative government would not show proper respect for people who in good faith oppose their schemes, ridiculing citizens for wanting to preserve the city they love and where they have made their homes. This government has acted as if it is the radical revolutionary party, not the Progressive Conservative Party.

What scares me is the possibility that this mega-scheme may destroy this marvellous city, with its sidewalk cafés and street musicians, its hot dog vendors and fruit and vegetable stands, its mixed uses of buildings, its mixture of people of all ages and economic status and ethnic backgrounds; a city rich in diversity, a city to live in, a city to walk in, a city to love. Amalgamation poses a major risk: that people with a different vision will predominate. The spectre of, for instance, another Spadina Expressway comes to mind, for I believe that was the defining moment making Toronto a great city: the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway by Bill Davis a quarter-century ago. Oh, that we had Bill Davis as Premier today.

They say that Toronto is the most livable city on the continent. If you don't believe that, just visit downtown Detroit. What we have here is a treasure: Toronto. We are now in the heart of it, right here, and surrounding this jewel are many communities in concentric circles, a vast metropolitan area, all more or less measuring themselves by how close they are to Toronto city hall.

Many decent citizens fear that this bill carries with it the seeds of destruction of our gem of a city, and if we are right, we may find that the city we love has been destroyed. And if Toronto ceases to exist, the reason for the existence of the surrounding communities vanishes as well. It will be a metropolitan area with an empty inner core, a body without a heart, without a brain and without a soul. The implications are immense. It would destroy our homes, our lives, our economy and maybe even our province.

I speak for myself only, but I have been to a number of meetings. Make no mistake, the spontaneous groundswell against this bill is truly a civic phenomenon. I have never seen such a public outcry in Toronto against arbi-

trary government. Even if, perish the thought, this bill becomes law next month, I predict the fight to preserve our city will continue by every legal and honourable means.

I say to you, elected representatives of the Progressive Conservative Party, you ignore this movement at your political peril. Surely conservatism demands that before such an immense step is taken, wide-ranging discussions be held. We all want to improve the city and the metropolitan area, but let us make sure that before irrevocable steps are taken, sober second thoughts prevail. I urge all Tories to return to their conservative roots and make sure the ideas in Bill 103 are treated with true conservative restraint.

The Chair: You have effectively used the bulk of your time, sir, and I want to thank you for coming forward this morning to make your presentation.

GAVIN MILLER

The Chair: Would Gavin Miller please come forward. Good morning, Mr Miller. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Gavin Miller: Mr Chair and members of the committee and all attending the hearing, I am a citizen of Toronto. I have lived in the greater Toronto area all my life, and in the city of Toronto most of that. I am concerned about the wellbeing of a city that has been incorporated since 1834. Bill 103 represents a threat to a constellation of places that over two million people call home.

To be sure, life would go on in the new megacity. There would still be Yonge Street and the CN Tower. The Leafs would probably still be around and they'd probably continue to lose games. The Don River would continue to flow. We could still count on humid spells in the summer and lots of slush in the winter. People would still marry and raise families, at least in parts of the city that retained some social cohesion. The squirrels in Queen's Park would still come bounding up in the hope of getting peanuts from you. We would even have a city council of sorts.

But it is time for a sober assessment of what this bill means in terms of social stability, environmental sustainability and civic responsibility. I grew up here and I know the greater Toronto area. I've ridden her transit lines; I've traced her rivers to their headwaters in the 905 belt; I've been to six of the seven municipal halls in Metro for various reasons, as well as one outside, witnessing the often fractious, frustrating, but democratic and human scale of their political procedures.

The greater Toronto area has beggars and saints, businesspersons and nurses, foxes and salamanders, 450-million-year-old bedrock exposed in places and yet the latest fashions. It also includes all the citizens who have been speaking here and who will continue to speak here at the hearings.

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Let's look at the issue of social stability first. We live in a time of profound cultural upheaval. So many things that people counted on, so many loyalties, so many institutions and so many of our roots all seem to be losing importance or even falling apart. A conservative mind should be concerned about all of this. Yet Bill 103, like

so much recent legislation, has a profoundly destabilizing effect on our city and on our communities. This is at the same time that it suppresses the flexibility and creativity for the innovation that we need and that local municipalities can provide, as Jane Jacobs has pointed out very clearly. Let's face it: Our municipal governments now, while they're flawed and sometimes frustrating, work generally well. We're dealing with the human condition here.

Although there is a disturbing increase in poverty and social distress generally, crime is still lower than in the US. Such things as blue box and garbage collection are reliable. We have good public libraries and recreation facilities. There has been an improving attitude toward our natural heritage in most of our municipalities. Public consultation opportunities have improved in many departments in the municipalities. Municipal councillors in the current system have a manageable scope of responsibilities and a reasonable ward size which allows for a certain availability to people who want to consult with them. This will not be the case for the megacity.

The municipalities as such are in better shape than, say, the health care system, so why do we need such radical surgery and a massive takeover by the province? The upheaval induced by the megacity will be destabilizing and demoralizing. Confusion over departments, jurisdiction, administrative districts, staff and bylaws will likely last for years. Bylaws passed by previous councils will still follow old municipal boundaries. Staff will be dismissed, with the likelihood that they will be replaced by people chosen, not by the elected city council, but by the province's transition team in accordance with the province's view of how Toronto should be run.

There will be fewer staff and politicians than is now the case, and this is presented as a cause for celebration. The current staff and politicians understandably want to keep their jobs. What's wrong with that, especially when their work contributes to a high quality of life and a responsive local government? Good services and responsive government don't appear by magic. You need to have people on hand.

Given the tremendous upheavals our society is undergoing, we do not need to destabilize it further with such massive, divisive, heavy-handed actions as Bill 103. The downloading of social services which is coming in tandem with amalgamation is a recipe for increased poverty, conflict and disorder. It will pit people against each other, and the weak and vulnerable will bear the brunt. This proposal for downloading has been condemned by a broad spectrum of parties, including the board of trade. We need to maintain provincial funding of social services, along with retaining our local municipalities.

My second point, environmental sustainability: The general opinion of all recent studies of governance in the greater Toronto area has been that we need to emphasize the greater Toronto area's problems, not simply Metro's. There must be clear and unambiguous regional coordination for the GTA to protect ecological features such as the Oak Ridges moraine, which is rapidly disappearing under urban sprawl; make public transit a priority; and where necessary equalize relations between local municipalities.

We must not risk a bankrupt, decayed core of the GTA, coupled with more unsustainable, unregulated kinds of development gobbling up farm land and natural habitats. The track record of the current provincial government when it comes to these critical environmental issues is frankly poor and these issues have not gone away. Canada's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, largely from cars, is, I understand, nowhere near getting under control. The megacity is likely to be less effective in dealing with these issues than the local municipalities combined with GTA coordination. Witness, for example, the careful attention to detail displayed by the city of Toronto with respect to ravines. It is clear we need both the large scale of the GTA and the micro-scale provided by local municipalities.

Finally, the amalgamation legislation is, I'm afraid, symptomatic of a deeper malaise in our culture. The provincial government is overriding local governance and granting to itself sweeping powers over Toronto but in a certain sense, we, as a people, have brought it on ourselves. Democracy is hard work and requires a foundation of commitment to truth and really thinking things through. We have not taken it seriously, although a lot of the people who are speaking here, the ones I have heard today, have shown a lot of thought and a lot of commitment.

The climate in which decisions are being made is not one of contemplation and discernment in the quest for wisdom. Instead there is a cycle of blame, protest and suppression in which all of us in varying degrees are caught. This is a serious time of reckoning for us as a society. We must become quiet, engage in self-examination and rethink the governance of our municipalities and protect local democracy. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Miller. You've used up your entire 10 minutes, and I want to thank you for coming forward this morning and making your presentation to the committee. Thank you for taking the time.

ISABEL SHOWLER

The Chair: Would Isabel Showler please come forward.

Applause.

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, I don't want to have to continue to make announcements about applause. I want to let you know that we're not empowered to sit past noon. We have 50 minutes of presentations to come so, please, let's not keep that up.

Good morning, Ms Showler, and welcome to the committee.

Isabel Showler: I want to thank you for the opportunity to come and speak to you. I think those of us who are older and have long years of experience have some responsibility to try in times, particularly critical times, to share that experience with you.

I was born in Toronto. I feel a little bit like a business that has just been subjected to a hostile takeover and is contemplating downsizing and restructuring and is very worried about what the results are going to be, for something into which I have put a great deal over the years.

When I was 19, I spent two months as an intern at what is now the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, the old Ontario Hospital in Toronto. I didn't go back to it again until 26 years later, in 1967, when I went there as an occupational therapist on staff. The building was exactly the same but the dynamics were different. There was a tremendous feeling of change and of excitement and exploration of new ways.

A group of very inventive people had taken one ward of about 80 men whose average stay in the hospital was more than 20 years and had begun to get them ready to leave hospital. They taught them to eat with a knife and fork again. They taught them to care about their grooming. They got them into workshops working. They went out into the community and found homes for them and they moved those people out into the community. It was a very exciting thing to see.

During that first year I went down to Indiana on a visit and I visited a state hospital down there and I found a group of people down there that were excited because that day, for the very first time, they had taken a group of patients outside the hospital on a visit and they felt they were breaking new ground. They were very excited about it and I realized how far behind us they were.

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Then, a few years later, Queen's Park said to the psychiatric staff at Queen Street: "It should be possible for you to get some of these patients out of the hospital. It has been shown that chronic patients can leave hospital with the new medications and all these things." The psychiatric staff said, "We have done that with the patients for which it's suitable." Queen's Park didn't believe it and they just said, "Do it."

It was my first experience of what I think of as the toothpaste approach to reduce services, which is that you squeeze on the system as hard as you can and you see what falls out and you try to deal with that. This has been our approach, in many ways, to health care since and it has been very hard to see.

The reason I tell you this is because I have this awful suspicion that people at Queen's Park don't know what goes on. People at Queen's Park don't really understand what goes on in the relationship between the administrators of the city and the councils and the citizens. They probably have no idea of the degree of communication which is available there, and if they do have an idea, they are probably envious. I'm sure it's going to be destroyed by Bill 103.

I suppose everybody knows the story about the English second-language class at the United Nations that was asked to write an essay on the elephant. The German wrote on the classification of the elephant, the Frenchman wrote on the love life of the elephant, the Englishman wrote on hunting the elephant in deepest Africa, the American wrote on bigger and better elephants and the Canadian wrote on the elephant, is it a provincial or a federal matter?

The concept of bigger and better as being better is not a Canadian concept. It's certainly not a Toronto concept. Many of the ideas that this government has seem to have come from below the border and not to be our way. The setting up of the Who Does What committee was a much

more Canadian thing. Trying to sort out whose responsibility this is and whose responsibility that is is the kind of typical Canadian approach that we have had, probably generated by our Constitution. We seem to be going to throw that out. They will take any particular bits of it that they like. They will not listen to the chairman of that committee which suggested that changes that are made should go slow. They are not doing it in a Canadian way. I feel very much that this is an imported kind of attitude.

I want to talk to you about time frames. It seems to me that we do things in three kinds of time frames: the short term, the long term and the eternal. In the short term it doesn't matter very much what we do. If we decide what we have for lunch today, it's not going to matter in the long run if we make a poor choice. We can make a different choice tomorrow.

But Bill 103 and Bill 104 are very much long-term decisions. When I think of a way of looking at the approach to long-term decisions, I think about living on an island in Georgian Bay where the way out in the winter was across the ice five miles. The first people who went walked very carefully and they had a long stick, and the long stick would go in front of them and they would bang, bang, bang on the ice, and as they went along they would make sure that the ice was going to hold them. I see no equivalent to that long stick in the way in which Bill 103 is being implemented. It seems to me it's more like somebody who says: "Oh, a trapeze is kind of interesting. I think I'll grab it and fly out and see if I can catch anything."

I'm feeling ashamed because I feel that the democracy which I am proud of and believed in and have enjoyed for all of my 75 years is being destroyed in one swoop of a pen. Bill 103 cuts at the roots of all of the things that made democracy responsive to people. It's replacing the decision-making by elected people by decision-making by appointed people. I can't imagine anything that could strike harder at the roots of democracy than that. I'm ashamed that I have not been able to maintain this democratic thing for my grandchildren and my great-granddaughter. I wish they could somehow or other have the same kind of opportunity to live in a democratic society that I have had up until now.

Then there is the eternal. The eternal time frame is the one in which we hold our values. Toronto, in my lifetime, has gone through some terrible times: the Depression when people really suffered. We had a hotel and I can remember as a teenager standing at the desk in the hotel as people came in to apply for a job which paid \$4.22 a week for seven days of work a week. I would say, "The job is filled," and they would say, "Will you please put my name down?" I would write down name after name with phone numbers, knowing that there was no point in the world of doing this except to make the people that were applying feel a little better, because this \$4.22 plus room and board job was not available to them but might turn up later.

I think we have built a city here that has some values. I think we value truthfulness, I think we value caring. I'm terribly afraid that those values are being attacked at the same time by this Bill 103. There is no opportunity for caring in it, and I do not feel the government was truthful

to us in what they were planning to do when they got themselves elected. I feel that those values have not been the same and a city that doesn't have eternal values is going to be a city that has lost its soul.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Showler. You've effectively used up your 10 minutes. I want to thank you on behalf of the committee for coming forward this morning.

FRANK SHOWLER

The Chair: Would Mr Frank Showler please come forward. Good morning, Mr Showler, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Frank Showler: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to the committee. I do hope the presentations that are made by various people will have some effect on what happens in relation to this bill. I too grew up in Toronto, and while I have lived in other places, I have lived here for the major portion of my life.

I'm concerned about a government, in this case, looking at a situation which is not broken and trying to fix it. The danger when you do that is that you destroy the thing that you're supposedly trying to fix. We have a city which has a reputation for being a good place to live. It has won various awards and commendations in that respect, and I'm concerned that those things are going to disappear.

One of the things that we have in the existing six municipalities is some chance for each municipality to do the things that it wants to do. The things that the people of North York want and the things that the people of Toronto want are not necessarily the same and, because of the structure that we have, those things can be different. They don't all have to be controlled by one body which is insisting that they be done in a particular way.

The other thing that I noticed, particularly in the city of Toronto, the current city of Toronto where I live, is that we have a lot of committees set up so that there's a lot of good input by citizens into what happens. In Toronto we have a safe city committee which has citizens that look at all kinds of things related to safety, whether it has to do with buildings or safety on the street or whatever; we have a committee which deals with race relations; we have a committee which deals with transportation. Those are all citizens' committees that have some input and influence on what city council does.

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I think it's going to be very difficult to see how that can be done in the large kind of city that this bill creates, and it's particularly hard when you realize that not only is it going to be a much larger city, it's going to have a small number of representatives. It's interesting that up in North Bay, where our Premier comes from, you can have 10 people on council and therefore you have one representative for every 5,500 people, whereas in the new city here we will have one representative for every 50,000 people.

It isn't just the kind of input I've been talking about that I think is necessary, it's also the small number of representatives, so that even if you want to make representation to your local person, it's going to be very

difficult to do that. It's also going to be very difficult to get elected to such a position unless you have lots and lots of money or some group backing you which has lots and lots of money. One of the things that I see happening is the large city being turned over to those who have money, because they are the people who will be elected to council.

The other thing I should say at this point is that democracy doesn't depend on elections. This government seems to believe that they must be a democratic government because they were elected and because they seem to be maintaining a reasonable amount of support among the public. Well, Hitler was elected too, and he maintained a considerable amount of support through all the time he was in power.

One of the things that democracy has to do with is the input that people can have on decisions that affect their lives as well as the kinds of civil liberties. We still have the civil liberties kinds of things where we can come and talk to you, protest and all those kinds of things, and I hope at least that will continue, but it's going to be much more difficult to influence a large government for the whole city than the local government we have now.

Specifically in relation to the bill itself, I'm concerned about the powers it gives to the board of trustees, for example. There are things in the bill that I hope this committee will make some changes on, if the bill has to go through at all, which I hope it won't. But if it does, I hope to see this committee making some changes on it.

One thing that bothers me most about the trustees is not just that they're appointed by the province — although I think it would be much better if they chose people who were elected from councils in the existing municipalities rather than simply appointing whoever they decide to appoint — it's the power they have, that instead of the democracy of a local council we will have those people controlling what is done.

For instance, subsection 11(5) gives them the power to control the budgets of the municipalities this year. I think you ought to look not only at that particular clause but at all the powers you are giving to the trustees. A lot of those go much further than they need to even if we're going to have this megacity.

The other thing that bothers me is that once this year is over, we have a transition team which, again, is appointed by the province and is not directly responsible to the people in the municipality it's working on. Of course the people in that municipality are also required to pay the costs of that transition team. One of the things the transition team has to do, is required to do, is in clause 16(4)(b):

“(b) consider whether restrictions should be imposed on the amounts the new city may raise and the amounts the new city and its local boards may spend in any year, and make detailed recommendations....”

This means in any year — that's what it says — presumably to the end of the life of that committee — though there's no requirement for a specific end to the life of that committee, and it's up to the minister when it should end, apparently from something else later in the bill. That means one of two things is going to happen, in view of the changes in costs that are being put on to the

municipalities. Either the result of those costs is that taxes will have to rise, or this committee could look at that and say: “You're raising taxes too much. You can't raise them that much, therefore you must not go beyond this limit.”

The Chair: Mr Showler, you're coming to the end of your time. I'm sorry to interrupt, but I hope you could wrap up.

Mr Showler: No problem. My point is that it's either going to raise taxes — and we have to remember that they affect people in apartments because their rents go up with the taxes, not only homeowners — or they're going to refuse to allow that tax rate to be put into effect and therefore all sorts of things will have to be cut even though the local council doesn't want to do that. Please take a look at that section and make some changes.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Showler, for coming forward and making your presentation this morning.

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BARBARA HALL

The Chair: Could Barbara Hall please come forward? Good morning, Mayor Hall. Welcome to the committee. You have 30 minutes to make your presentation this morning.

Ms Barbara Hall: Thank you, Mr Chair, Minister. Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here and have this opportunity to speak with you. I regret that the committee decided not to come to city hall or indeed to the city halls around Metro. We are open places. We like to welcome people. I know, Minister, before you were elected, you came as part of the Trimmer inquiry to city hall and had a discussion with citizens there at that time.

The anti-amalgamation campaign has mushroomed into a movement which is packing halls and churches across Toronto and neighbouring municipalities. It's not a few politicians making speeches but thousands of citizens from all political, cultural and economic backgrounds who are genuinely worried about the future of their city. They're sending a powerful message to this government: “We support change, but only if it's done properly. Slow down and get it right. A massive change affecting 2.3 million citizens needs to emerge through consultation and consensus.”

That's why people want to be heard and that's why we are holding a referendum.

Let's be very clear on what's involved here. The amalgamation of Metro Toronto is the equivalent of merging seven complex corporations into one. Bill 103 would create a so-called local government larger than six provinces and almost as large as a seventh, Alberta; a government with 54,000 employees and a \$7-billion budget; a government which is supposed to be accessible and responsible to its 2.3 million citizens. The potential for chaos and uncertainty is enormous, and that's the last thing Toronto needs right now.

This city, which is the economic engine of the province, is only now emerging from the devastation caused by the last recession. The real estate market is picking up steam. Investors once again are looking favourably at our

city. There are shovels in the ground as new projects come on stream. You may have heard the announcement in the last couple of days that the Raptors have started work on their new stadium at the foot of Bay Street. I got the cheque for the building permit. The revitalization of Yonge Street is under way and major firms are moving back to the city.

In today's world of global competition, job-creating investment flows to tranquil markets. Rapid change and uncertainty make the business community very nervous, and that could shatter what is still a fragile economic recovery.

But the amalgamation debate is not just about dollars and cents. The Saturday after the so-called mega-week I was at the Regent Park Community Health Centre in your riding, Minister, listening to neighbourhood kids celebrating Dr Martin Luther King Jr's birthday. It was a bitter-sweet event. The children talked with great eloquence about Dr King's inspirational life, particularly his famous "I have a dream" speech.

But then they talked in an even more powerful way about the poverty, the violence and racism which are far too common in their lives. It struck me, as I walked home from that meeting, that when we talk about the impact of Bill 103, we can't talk in abstract terms, because Toronto is much more than a collection of buildings and services or a column of program costs which can be easily moved from one ledger to another.

The city is home to 650,000 citizens who live, work and play and want to realize their dreams. Now the province wants to tear out the foundations and start over. The question is, why? It's a question for which the province has no sensible answer.

With legislation as sweeping as Bill 103, the public would normally be presented with a carefully prepared white paper which explained the government's proposals. But aside from a flyer in our mailboxes, there have been only a few speeches and background releases. What has emerged from those pieces is a series of dubious claims that are not supportable.

For example you, Minister, claim that amalgamation will save money, but your only evidence is the hastily written after-the-fact report. The report says that most of the projected savings would come not through amalgamation but by privatizing some police services, computer operations and water treatment plants. What does that have to do with amalgamation?

Where the savings argument really falls apart is in the face of the US experience with megacities. Wendell Cox, a self-described conservative expert in the field, has found that the bigger the city, the more it costs to operate. US cities of over one million in population spend between 20% and 40% more per capita than smaller cities. Higher costs lead inevitably to higher property taxes or fewer services. In all likelihood, both will occur in the megacity, with devastating results for every sector of Toronto.

The province claims that the calibre and availability of services will not decline when seven different local governments are suddenly mashed together, but they have no proof, no studies and no research, nothing but hope that amalgamation won't cost taxpayers more.

I challenge this government to produce today the cost-effectiveness studies, the expert opinions, the well-researched policy papers. The onus is on you to justify amalgamation, and so far you've failed to do it.

That's not good enough for the citizens of Toronto. They deserve more than poorly conceived policy which will so radically change the city that works, the city that regularly receives international acclaim.

Let's slow down and get it right. There are just too many unanswered questions.

What will happen to our recreation programs and facilities in an amalgamated city? Will our citizens still have the kind of access they now enjoy? Or will a megacity mean darkened arenas and unsafe playgrounds? The province can't tell us.

What about the critically important programs which help seniors, the homeless and those living with AIDS in our city? These programs are pushed to the limit now, but if amalgamation brings higher operating costs, as the experts say it will, can they survive cost-cutting? The province can't tell us.

Toronto's vibrant neighbourhoods were built and are preserved and sustained through partnerships between citizens and their local government. How will such sensitive community planning survive in a megacity? The province can't tell us.

Declining services and higher taxes will drive businesses and people away. How will a megacity protect the quality of life and job opportunities for its citizens? The province can't tell us.

It's clear to me that the government doesn't understand the magnitude of the change they're proposing. People familiar with restructuring are appalled at the lack of thought and planning put into this proposed mega-merger of seven distinct corporations.

This new megacity is expected to integrate 54,000 employees with different work practices. Yet this huge corporate merger is to occur at year's end with a complete new management team and a new board of directors. It's a formula for chaos, and an expensive one. The estimated transition costs alone will amount to a staggering \$200 million to \$400 million.

It will take years for the city to recover from the organizational trauma, to say nothing of the trauma inflicted on dedicated municipal employees worried about their jobs. Let's slow down and get it right.

Think of all the time and energy wasted in trying to weld together an unwieldy megacity structure. Meanwhile, crucial neighbourhood and community issues will be neglected. Investment opportunities will go elsewhere because no one's paying attention.

1150

With officials mired in a swamp of reorganization, the citizens I represent will be left with a distant and unresponsive government. It's a very high price to pay for such a poorly thought out proposal. This is a corporate merger which will eventually destroy the corporations instead of making them stronger.

So far I've been talking only about amalgamation, but let's make no mistake: Bill 103 and the lopsided dumping of social service costs on to municipalities are firmly linked. Ignoring the lessons of the Great Depression, the

province has offloaded major income maintenance and health care costs on to property taxpayers. As the dust settles from the mega-week blitz, a very disturbing picture is emerging.

For starters, property taxes will need to rise 11% in the city of Toronto in order to meet a \$202-million shortfall in the tradeoff of education for welfare, long-term care and other program costs. This will worsen the tax disparity between the 416 and 905 areas, prompting an exodus of jobs and people from the city.

What happens to fragile social and infrastructure spending programs when a recession hits again and welfare costs jump, as they did in the early 1990s? What happens when increasing numbers of seniors rightfully seek the support they need in old age? What happens to property taxpayers who have to absorb two financial blows, the added costs of social programs and market value assessment?

As with amalgamation, the province's actions prompt far more questions than answers. They promise special funds here and special funds there. But all that means is greater entanglement and dependency of municipalities on the province. Will these funds survive? What about the citizens?

Where does this rushed reorganization leave the families in Parkdale, the business owner on Dundas, the couple in the Beach or the widower on St. Clair? What about the next generation coming out of our schools? The evidence suggests that the legacy of the megacity would be crumbling neighbourhoods, user fees, bureaucratic chaos, gutted rec and social programs, darkened arenas, higher taxes and fewer jobs. I am convinced that no one in this room wants that. I'm also convinced that we all agree that the status quo is unacceptable. So what do we do?

We take the time and we do it right. Let's step back and examine the whole picture. Let's look ahead to see what will be needed 25 years from now. As it stands, the province has embarked on a partial solution to an ill-defined problem. Instead of rushing ahead with flawed legislation and bad public policy, give the citizens of Metro the same right as everyone else in the province: a chance to work out local solutions through consensus and consultation. More specifically, let's build on the excellent studies we have — Trimmer, Golden, Crombie. Let's find ways to implement their major recommendations, not ignore them as is currently being done. We have ideas, the citizens have ideas. Let's sit down together and continue to build this great city.

If that means delaying implementation, so be it. What's more important? Doing it fast and getting it wrong or doing it right? The answer is obvious. I'm not here today because I'm trying to save my job, I'm trying to save the city I love.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mayor Hall. We have four minutes per caucus for questions. The problem I have is that we're going to have a bell any minute now and I have to let everyone go to vote. We're going to start with the Liberal caucus and see if we can get through its four minutes and then I hope reconvene after the bells for the NDP and Conservative caucuses, if that's agreeable to everyone on the committee. I believe it would be.

Mr Colle: Thank you, Madam Mayor. I hope when the minister questions you that you again ask him to fulfil his commitment which he made in the House and in the press to visit each one of the municipalities as he closes their doors, and I hope you confront him with that again because he's gone back on his word on that.

In terms of your point, I think what you're basically saying is, like in the movie Jerry Maguire, "Show us the money." I don't think you're ever going to see it, because what has obviously happened here is that you've seen the Trojan Horse. The megacity is the Trojan Horse for the downloading of social services on Metro. That is why they're in such a mad rush. That is why they won't slow down, because that is their hidden agenda. That is the minister's hidden agenda: to dump social welfare, family benefits, social housing and child care on to the property taxpayer. That is the machiavellian scheme. That is why they won't turn back. But I want to get to something more fundamental.

Today and over the last few days we've had excellent presentations from citizens of your city, and the one thing they keep referring to is beyond the money. They say: "How come we've come to this point? How come we've let democracy slip away?" I know Mrs Showler said she was ashamed that she's allowed this to happen. I tell her, "Don't be ashamed; you're fighting it." How could we let this happen when in the legislation it's so darned specific that Mr Leach is putting the trustees and the transition team above the law?

These people have taken over government here in Metro. "The decisions of the transition team are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court." He's even said that the Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply, which means you could hold meetings behind closed doors and not notify people. In other words, the rules of natural justice are gone.

This is what this minister has done in black and white and yet people are basically complacent or cheerleading this. But thankfully there are enough people who have come here who have seen through this charade, this unmitigated attack on democracy by this minister and on the citizens of Toronto. Perhaps you would like to comment on that, Mayor Hall.

Ms Hall: I think what's happening in the city right now is that thousands and thousands of people view their community as at risk and are coming out to understand what's happening. People are concerned about that. I go to four or five meetings a night. Steve Gilchrist and I at least once a week are on a panel or in a debate somewhere. I get invited to a dozen meetings and am only able to go to three or four. In church basements and schools and community centres, hundreds and hundreds of people are coming out.

The important thing about that is that people are saying: "We helped to build this city and we want to be able to continue to do that. We're prepared to do that, local government has enabled us to do that, and we want an opportunity to express our opinion on changes that we believe will significantly limit our ability to be involved in the future."

I think it's an opportunity for all of us who care about the health of this community — the provincial govern-

ment, the local government, business people and citizens — to sit down together and say, "What is the change we need that ensures that coordination is done on the GTA basis where it's required but that strong local government still exists?"

People have been awakened by this, no question. Let's all take advantage —

The Chair: I'd like to get in the NDP's time because I think we'll have a five-minute bell.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Do I have a few seconds?

The Chair: No.

Mr Silipo: Barb Hall, I want to tell you I feel very proud to be able to call you my mayor today, given your presentation. Thank you very much.

I'm not going to try to outdo your presentation. I have some questions I want to ask because I think it's important that we pursue these in the short time. If there was more time, I would actually be happy to have the minister get into more of an exchange with you than for you to hear my voice.

The business aspect is one of the pieces that you touched on, the reaction from business and the instability that could be caused. I want to ask you to elaborate a little more on that because of the danger that see that might cause to the city, to the future of the metropolis.

Ms Hall: Business leaders, if they merge, when they merge, have thought it through well. They have a board of directors that has a common vision and goal. They select staff to achieve that. They do it carefully. What they view here is a brand-new board of directors of 44 taking on senior staff who've been hired by someone else, acquiring seven corporations. They see the lights being turned out in seven corporations at midnight on December 31 and someone going to flip the switch at a minute past midnight, and their fear is that the light won't come on. That's not how businesses would merge.

The other thing that many business people recognize is that what can be economies of scale at a lower level, lower size, become diseconomies of scale at a larger level. The minister often says it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that one fire department would be cheaper than six, but it's interesting that in Kingston where they've amalgamated, a voluntary amalgamation that the communities worked out, the legislation provided —

The Chair: Excuse me, Mayor Hall, I hate to do this, I hate to interrupt, but there are three minutes left on the bell and I have to allow all members three minutes minimum to get up for a vote. We'll recess and we'll come back and Mr Silipo can complete his questioning. We'll recess for about five minutes.

The committee recessed from 1203 to 1215.

The Chair: Come to order, please. We have about two minutes left for Mr Silipo.

Mr Silipo: Mayor Hall, one of the questions I'd like to ask is around the referendum process. You've no doubt heard comments from a number of government members, I think most recently the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, implying if not stating outright that somehow the referendum process was not appropriate or not legal because the mayors, as he put it, are in control of the whole process. I'd like to get your comments on that.

Ms Hall: Maybe I wish we had that much power. We don't. It's a legal process. It's the same process we went through when we had a referendum about the abolition of Metro. We thanked the provincial government for changes in the Municipal Act which allow voting to be done in new ways. I think it will be good for all of us, in terms of democracy, that more people will vote in all municipal elections because of their ability to do so by mail. It's also cost-effective; it will reduce the cost of elections.

Certainly our staff were very surprised to see those comments. They had discussions with provincial staff about the manner in which they're doing it. There are many protections built into our vote and the way it's done. This is a referendum where I have said and council has said that we'll be bound by the outcome of that. As you've heard today, I feel strongly about amalgamation, but if the majority of Toronto voters vote in favour of it, then I'll drop my opposition, and I call on the provincial government to do the same thing.

The Chair: Now we're moving into the time for the government caucus.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Thank you, Madam Mayor; my mayor, as a matter of fact. Just to get a few things straight, it's been indicated that the size of council wouldn't be able to respond to local citizens and yet the mayors' proposal, I believe, recommended that you go to 50,000 to one, and in Scarborough at the present time it's 60,000 to one.

Ms Hall: What I meant by that was a council of 44 versus a local council.

Hon Mr Leach: But you recommended a council of 48, with six mayors.

Ms Hall: That was the regional, GTA body that would do the coordinating as opposed to the local council that I would recommend stay small to deal with the very local issues.

Hon Mr Leach: The report that the four mayors put out, presented to the Premier and me, recommended that the councils within Metropolitan Toronto, the six councils, be reduced from 106 to 54, 48 councillors and six mayors.

Ms Hall: That's correct.

Hon Mr Leach: That's pretty close to 44, except that you just saved six mayors.

Ms Hall: But the point that I've made about the size of councils is the group of people who are making the decisions. For example, last night I was at a meeting in your riding, at the Rosedale United Church. People there were talking about a number of local issues they've been involved in and how they came to city hall and how in that situation, faced with a council of 17 when they wanted to get involved and clean up the Don and make that a public recreation area, they had to convince nine councillors. In the new council that's proposed, they would have to go to a council of 44, some of whom I suspect will have never heard of the Don or won't know where it is, and convince 25 people.

Hon Mr Leach: You're quite aware of the community council proposal that would have either seven or eight, which is less than nine, and be responsible for local decision-making, such things as cleaning up the Don.

Ms Hall: I understand from Mr Gilchrist's comments on that, because there are no details in the legislation, that community councils would be made up of the local councillors from an area together with an equal number of appointed citizens and that this group would be advisory only to the larger council.

Hon Mr Leach: No, our proposal is that the community councils would have the ability to make decisions, provided that they were within the corporate guidelines. The neighbourhood committees are very similar to what you have in the city of Toronto right now.

Ms Hall: So this would be then seven appointed citizens, as opposed to accountable elected citizens, who would be making decisions?

Hon Mr Leach: No, you would have six or seven elected councillors forming a community council. They would ask the advice of neighbourhood committees, very similar to what the city of Toronto does now when you advertise for citizen input, and would be empowered to make local planning decisions.

I just want to get one other thing on the record.

Ms Hall: Is that included in the legislation? I've read the legislation and not seen that.

Hon Mr Leach: The neighbourhood committees are there.

Ms Hall: It says "neighbourhood committees," but it doesn't say anything more than —

Hon Mr Leach: In all of my speeches, including the kickoff speech that I made, the community council was done.

I just wanted to mention —

The Chair: Minister, as much as I'd like to let you go on, I have to be fair with the time for everybody. You've come to the end of your time. I just want to thank Mayor Hall for coming forward today to make your presentation. Thank you, Mayor Hall.

Mr Silipo: Point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Now on a point of order.

Mr Silipo: We're not going to get many occasions as a committee to have these kinds of useful exchanges between the minister and one of the mayors, so I'd like to ask for agreement that we extend another five or 10 minutes and just allow some of these points to be fleshed out in this way.

The Chair: In order to do that, I have to ask for unanimous consent from the entire committee. Can I say that we'll ask the minister for another five minutes of question and answer?

Hon Mr Leach: I'm here till 12:30.

The Chair: Okay, I understand we have unanimous consent of the committee. I want to ask Mayor Hall if she would mind that.

Ms Hall: I would love to have an opportunity to talk with the minister about these issues.

Hon Mr Leach: Any time.

The Chair: Because of unanimous consent, we'll just continue for another five minutes. Go ahead, Minister Leach.

Hon Mr Leach: I just wanted to make sure that we had on the record that the member for Oakwood said that the trustees had special powers by the courts not being able to overturn them and not being subject to the

Statutory Powers Procedure Act. I'd like everyone to know that that's common legislative language in just about every bill that goes through this Legislature, including all of the bills that were presented by the NDP and the Liberals. This is not something that's unique to this bill and I just wanted to make sure that you understood that.

Ms Hall: But I also understand that I was elected by the people of Toronto and that if the bill is approved as it's drafted, between then and the end of my term my powers and responsibilities will be significantly reduced as a result of that legislation.

Hon Mr Leach: I disagree with that totally. The trustees are there just to ensure that nothing untoward takes place. If the council carries out its responsibilities in the manner in which it normally does, and I'm sure you will, you won't even know that the transition team is there.

Ms Hall: As an elected mayor, I find it insulting to suggest that I need a trustee to monitor me. I think about the city of Toronto, where we have not increased taxes for five years, we've reduced our costs significantly, we are even now as we speak reducing our amount of debt towards the year 2001 when we will be debt-free. I feel that from a financial perspective we have been probably the most responsible level of government and yet we are being told that appointed people will look over our shoulders and, if one reads the legislation, have the ability to cancel our budgets. It says they must approve them, approve expenditures over \$50,000, approve any hiring of staff, all of those things. You may not view that —

Hon Mr Leach: Well, let me ask you this —

Ms Hall: What my staff tell me is that my power that I was elected by citizens to perform is —

Hon Mr Leach: Let me ask you this: Do you think it's appropriate that the city of Toronto council — I'm not sure whether it was council or a committee of council — passed a motion looking to explore ways to —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Leach: No, Toronto passed a motion to explore ways of getting rid of assets in the same manner as the borough of East York. The borough of East York passed a motion saying, "Put them into a" —

Ms Hall: Actually, I spoke with staff in your office and I sent them a copy of the motion that was actually approved. I make the point that all expenditures by Toronto city council are made in a public forum. What we approved was a motion asking our staff to report on the action that East York council had taken. Somebody stood up in council and said, "East York is looking at various options around their finances."

On the basis of our asking for a report on what another municipality was considering doing, we should have trustees appointed to oversee our work? I think you would be extremely upset if the federal government were to do that to the provincial government. We at the local level are extremely insulted by the action that your government has taken on this issue.

Hon Mr Leach: I can assure you that if the city of Toronto carries out its responsibility, as I'm sure you

will, in a manner that you normally do, you won't even know they're there.

Interruption.

The Chair: Order.

Hon Mr Leach: I also found interesting a couple of comments in your speech that you're concerned about welfare costs leaping as they did during the recession. I just wanted to make note that welfare caseload doubled between 1985 and 1990 when we were in the midst of the best economic times we ever had under the Liberal government.

Mr Silipo: So what's the point? They're going to increase. You're saying they're going to increase.

Hon Mr Leach: The point is that you just can't assume you're going to have a downturn and welfare will go up. That's why we've set up a fund. Whether in good times or in bad times, we will have a fund there to make sure that you can —

The Chair: Sorry, Minister. We've actually gone a bit beyond the five minutes that was allotted. I want to thank Mayor Hall —

Ms Hall: If I may just answer that question?

The Chair: No, we've gone beyond, Mayor Hall.

Hon Mr Leach: We can carry on after.

The Chair: They can continue a discourse at another time. There will be a subcommittee meeting in room 110 in two minutes. We're in recess until 3:30.

The committee recessed from 1228 to 1544.

The Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the afternoon session of the standing committee on general government. Order, please. Thank you for your patience. Some of the members are trickling in. As I said, we had a little bit of a different process this time around, so I think there's some confusion.

Just at the outset, I know the clerk has been speaking with many of you as you've come in the room. As the audience, you're treated the same as an audience in the chamber. There are to be no outbursts, and noise is to be kept to a minimum. It's not a participatory thing from the audience. We are here to hear people who have made their presentations. We're already behind and if we have to have too many discussions about that, then we'll lose even more time and people might lose the opportunity to do their deputation today.

DON HEAP

The Chair: With no further ado, I'd like to welcome Mr Heap, a former member, I might note, from Trinity-Spadina, I believe. Welcome, sir. You have 10 minutes today to make your presentation. At the end of your presentation, if there's any time remaining, the Liberal caucus will have the opportunity to ask some questions.

Mr Don Heap: Thank you, Mr Chairman. First, I want to use the expression "Let only the truth be spoken here, and only the truth be heard." I thank you for inviting me to speak with you on Bill 103.

At first, I was unsure what to bring forward from my active background: the usual academic training for the Anglican priesthood, which was briefly interrupted by the Second World War; the three years in charge of a rural Quebec parish; 18 years in Toronto as a factory labourer;

or 21 years as a New Democrat elected representative, first in city and Metro councils and then in the House of Commons? Well, I decided that those experiences would be well covered by others, and therefore I offer you some reflections on all of that, reflections I made especially during the past three years of voluntary retirement while I continue my voluntary service in an Anglican parish.

You have likely heard the old story of the sheep and the goats. They all come before the throne on Judgement Day and the bottom line for each one is, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me." I used to ask myself, when I heard that story, "Am I a sheep or a goat?" I've decided that I am both. That story is not so much about heaven or hell — that is, after death — as about the choices we make here and now every day. Do we serve the needs of our neighbours, especially the poorest, or do we ignore them?

I say to the members of the committee on the government side that I believe that you believe you are doing what needs to be done, what is right, but you have forgotten the least of God's brothers and sisters. I believe your long days of work shut in this building have helped you to forget many of the people you pledged to serve here.

With this bill you are cutting off, killing, the human networks of life in our cities, in the communities where we live in Metro Toronto. You are doing it to save taxpayers' money, you say, yet you cannot prove that against the mounting evidence of experience that shows you will more likely waste taxpayers' money.

You appeal to the philosophy that cutting the deficit and cutting income taxes will restore a healthy economy and good work for all who want it in Ontario. Twelve years of that philosophy practised by the government of Canada has brought to most people in our country declining real incomes, fear of being jobless, fear for the health of our environment and shock at the high-handed actions of the elected government, particularly of Ontario.

I will not argue against your philosophy, both because others more expert in economics are doing that and because I wish to focus my words on what is being done to human beings. I believe you are wiping out the social paths by which people in our cities talk with each other for the public good. During many generations, Toronto's people built these paths, these links, so as to decide together what we will do as a city or as cities, to find our mistakes and, together, to create better ways.

You are harshly closing off debate in the Legislature and abolishing the municipal forums of debate because you do not wish to hear a voice other than your own. In fact, your government has boasted that no matter what is the result of a referendum, you will ignore the people you pledged to serve.

I believe that you intend to disempower the people, robbing us of the structures of democratic consultation that we have created so that you can rule a population of two million people who will be unable to bring effective democratic opposition to your plans. You are confiscating through your board of trustees and transition team the wealth that was accumulated by the people of our cities over many generations. You are rejecting an essential part of the rule of law by denying the right of citizens to

challenge any unjust or foolish decisions your trustees and transition team may make. No doubt they are good people, but they can make big mistakes.

1550

You are setting up a dictatorship over two million people. You're granting yourselves and your friends the right to privatize all the public services that the people of our cities have created, to hand them over secretly, for a price that cannot be challenged in court, to people who will see them as mainly a licence to grow richer, without any respect for the people who give the services or for the people who need them. You are abolishing all possibility of democratic, lawful challenge and change. In doing that, you will deny and attack and harass the people of our city.

You will wound the human dignity of most people who are now living here peaceably as neighbours. You will bring massive confusion and bitter quarrelling, even violence, that will wreck the very economy you say you are improving. You are showing a terrifying contempt for human beings. Why? I believe you are in a trap. Old habits of commerce that for generations seemed to many people to produce good results from the rule of wealth are now causing mass unemployment in a rich country and rapid ruin of our soil, water and air, and they're once again generating the world trade wars and re-armament that led to the First World War and the Second World War.

We need a deep change in the way we live together, but not by making the rule of wealth an absolute dictatorship. I beg you to reflect.

For myself, it was six years ago, near the end of my time in Parliament, that I began to find that I needed a deep change in my life; not a change of goal — my goal was and is a society of cooperation and mutual help — so much as a different manner of working towards that goal. For half a century I had accepted the usual manner of doing it, including hostile struggle against enemies. I joined the Army in 1944 and trained to kill Germans or Japanese, as the case might be, but fortunately the war was ended by others soon after I finished training.

Since then, I entered into the political and economic struggle against the minority of wealthy men who control our economy. I said many harsh and hateful words about the wealthy and their government allies, words for which I am now sorry because they do not move us towards life. I must now take much more seriously the words of Jesus in the sixth chapter of the Good News according to Luke: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who abuse you."

Therefore, because you are doing to the people things that make me see you as enemies, I must also love you, I must seek to do you good, I must pray for you. I have come today hoping to speak the truth in love, as the apostle Paul urges in the third chapter of his letter to the Ephesians. Accordingly, part of my daily prayer has been for some time that God be with you and with all who have undertaken the burdens of ruling us, the burdens of making decisions for us, the burdens of running the risks of being betrayed or of betraying others, the risks of opening divisions among us and creating occasions of hatred. God is with you too.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Heap. You have exhausted your 10-minute time. I want to thank you for coming today to make your presentation to the committee.

MARIO SILVA

The Chair: Would Mario Silva please come forward. Good afternoon, Mr Silva.

Mr Mario Silva: I want to thank the members of the committee for providing me the opportunity to make a presentation about Bill 103. My name is Councillor Mario Silva. I am the chair of the city's economic development committee and I also represent the city's west end, ward 3.

Members of the committee, you have to understand that the megacity will cost more than what we have now. Big governments cost more. Bill 103 will fundamentally change the economic development process for a region that is larger than six other provinces. This change, combined with mega-downloading, means investor uncertainty about the approval process, higher taxes, fewer services and job losses.

We certainly know the situation of what happened in Quebec, particularly when the separatist government got elected and talked about the referendum and separating from this country. This great uncertainty is driving businesses away from our city as well. If we talk even about the situation that every city in Metro has different official plan amendments, that they have different zonings, the whole structure of having to deal with that and putting in place a system that will pinpoint how to equalize that, it will create a transition period of maybe one or two years. Investors who are presently coming to this city do not want to wait that long.

Megacity is too much, too fast. The only group that will move faster than this government is business from Toronto if Bill 103 is passed.

Look in the binder. I'm sure all of you got the binder the mayor presented this morning. You will see that Metro spends 55% more per capita than the regional government in the 905 area. Metro's population is 2.3 million. Each region in the 905 area in less than 800,000.

I want to point to this particular chart that I think most of you got today from the mayor, at tab 8. The city of Toronto talks about the population; all of you are aware it's 2.3 million. In most other regions, like I said, it's 800,000 or less.

Let's look now at the spending. Metro spends \$1,800 per person. The region of Durham spends less than \$800 per person. We can say that welfare is probably the number one contributing factor to that, given the fact that Toronto still acts as a magnet for many people throughout the country who are unemployed. This is the place that they come because of the services that are offered within cities: the hostels, the facilities and the different social agencies we have as well.

But even if you take welfare, for example, out of Metro, Metro is still 55% more expensive than the other regions. So we have here a situation where bigger is not better.

In the binder you'll also see what the Fraser Institute says, what Wendell Cox says and what Andrew Sancton says, that big government costs more.

Again I want to point to the binder. I'll read from one of the gurus of the Tory party, Michael Walker — not the councillor Michael Walker, but Michael Walker of the Fraser Institute:

"On the surface, collapsing a number of small businesses into one big 'efficient' governmental region seems like a cost-saving slam-dunk. After all, do you really need five separate water departments, five separate garbage departments, five separate building inspection departments, etc?"

"However, there is another side. That can be seen most readily in the fact that municipalities proposing to eliminate cost and duplication by amalgamation invariably have within their borders many competing suppliers of goods and services that the taxpayers want in their role as consumers. For example, it is hard to find a region that doesn't have several automobile dealerships or many providers of automobile repair and service. Wouldn't consumers be better served if those duplicated facilities were provided by a single provider? In fact, why do we need to have more than one automobile company, more than one garage and more than one gasoline provider?"

"We have to have alternatives, because without competition, the quality of the product deteriorates, and the consumer, while perhaps initially saving the cost of duplication and overlap and facilities, ultimately gets a very bad product. That was certainly the experience in East Germany with the production of the car driven only by those who had no alternative, the Trabant. If amalgamation doesn't serve the interests of consumers as buyers of autos and other goods and services, why do we expect that it will serve their interests as consumers of government services?"

I think most of you will agree with that.

1600

In the US, Wendell Cox has noted that cities with a population of over 1 million people spend 20% to 40% more per capita than cities in the 100,000 to 1 million range — so more government, bigger government, more cost.

Downtown Toronto is the economic engine that drives Ontario. Scotiabank just did a study. Financial service is the biggest generator of jobs in the GTA, bigger than the automotive sector, and the GTA is 50% of Ontario's economic output. However, the Scotiabank study says that those financial jobs can't be taken for granted, that this sector is highly mobile and we could lose it. Today all you need really is a telephone and a desk and you have your own business. People no longer need office buildings downtown. This is the report that was produced by Scotiabank. It's called Financial Services at the Crossroads.

Page 2 illustrates that the financial service contributes 48% of Ontario's output. This, unfortunately, could be gone. Most of these financial services and buildings downtown could be looking at a tax increase of \$1 million to \$2 million to \$3 million annually, but I don't know exactly what they'll be getting in services in return for that money.

I encourage all of you to read this report by Scotiabank. I think it's a fascinating report because it deals with a lot of issues in the downtown core. I think the

major argument we've been making as a city, why we are concerned about amalgamation, is basically about the hole-in-the-doughnut effect. It is about the quality-of-life issues. It is about keeping a vibrant and exciting downtown core where businesses stay and prosper.

If business communities have concerns, your government should have concerns as well about the amalgamation and about the downloading of services.

What you are giving the economic generator of Ontario is a bigger government that costs more. You may think that if you take out the cities it costs less, but that is not what the evidence says.

In the last two years of my being chair of the economic development committee, we've been working on a strategy report on how to get investments and cut some of the red tape, all things that I think most of your government will be interested in knowing, what we've been doing as a city. The city of Toronto has engaged in several partnerships, both with the financial sector and some developers, to look at particular office buildings that have been abandoned, look at ways of using those particular buildings for live-work spaces, for conversion. So we've done quite a bit as a city.

You'll be fascinated to know that our unemployment rate within the city of Toronto is lower than that of the GTA. It's about 7%. The GTA average is about 8%, 8.5%, 9%. We have lower statistics than the GTA for their own population within the downtown core.

"Toronto is Canada's financial centre, as was stated in this report," called Vision Forward. "It boasts the tenth-largest stock exchange in the world and an abundance of brokerage and insurance industry head offices. Toronto's financial core is home to five of the seven schedule 1 domestic banks." It gets about 82% as well of all foreign banks within the country. So you can see that —

The Chair: You'll have to wrap up, Mr Silva. We're getting towards the end of your allotted time.

Mr Silva: Certainly. I'll wrap up by quoting from another book, that is Fortune magazine, which ranks Toronto number one in the world. We obviously must be doing something right. Although we hear constant criticism about this government, about Toronto, the city of Toronto is recognized as a leader in the world. We set the trends in the world. This conservative magazine states the fact that we are a leader in the world. We want to make sure that we continue to be a leader in the world and we are afraid this particular policy will destroy that.

It was stated over and over again by every research that was done that "bigger" means more money. It's as simple as that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Silva.

HELEN RILEY

The Chair: Would Helen Riley please come forward. Good afternoon, Ms Riley. Welcome to the committee. I guess you understand you'll probably be interrupted in about six minutes or so, but if there's any time remaining when we come back from voting in the Legislature, that time will be allotted to the Liberal Party to ask questions.

Ms Helen Riley: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to the committee today. I have given the

clerk a written presentation. If I read that, it will take the full 10 minutes. I would prefer to speak very briefly, maybe two or three minutes, and then I would like to ask my sister Raging Grannies to come and join me with a song for you, with your permission, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Let's hear your submission first.

Ms Riley: Thank you. I live in East York. My children and grandchildren also live in East York, and in Toronto. Since I retired from my position as senior economist at the Ontario Ministry of Finance I have spent many volunteer hours on both local and Metro issues. I now chair the East York safety council and I chair the Metro pedestrian issues subcommittee. I do not belong to any political party but I consider myself a red Tory. I voted Progressive Conservative in the last provincial election. John Parker is my MPP and I'm glad to see him here.

I am proud to be part of a stream of articulate and reasonable citizens who are coming before you to tell you that Bill 103 is an abomination. I will not repeat all the arguments against the appointment of a board of trustees and a transition team, their unprecedented powers, bureaucrats overriding elected councils, mandated cooperation, secrecy of meetings with municipal bureaucrats, lack of any recourse to the courts tying the hands of even the new mega-council — you have heard it all and will continue to hear it from other deputants.

This provincial government is acting like a Third World dictatorship, or like an old-fashioned central Communist government. When I was a teenager visiting Tito's Yugoslavia, students there maintained that a one-party system was so much more efficient than western democracies. Why not declare yourselves rulers for life and have done with it?

It's important to note that this bill will affect all of Ontario, not just Metro. Our democratic rights are being taken away. Bill 103 begins it, Bill 104 continues it, and who knows what will come later? At the very least, all the provisions of Bill 103 dealing with the appointment and powers of the trustees and the transition team must be deleted, but that is not enough. The whole bill must be withdrawn.

Toronto is known as the city that works and it is the envy of many. Why destroy it? A mega-council cannot hope to consider local concerns. The destructive car culture of the suburbs will overtake us.

Extensive discussion could lead to some clarification of roles, some simplification of funding. Instead, we will have mass confusion for several years, service disruptions, a multiplicity of bylaws and regulations, a loss of investor confidence, and a disfranchised and discouraged electorate. Also, as anyone who has worked in a large bureaucracy knows, the larger the bureaucracy the more layers of management, the more wasted time, the more wasted money, the less responsiveness. We will all be paying more for less.

Is Toronto undergoverned? Of course not. We need all the local councillors we have. I'm not so sure about the Metro councillors.

Neighbourhood committees are no substitute for local government. I serve as a volunteer on many committees but I do not know why anyone would want to serve on such an unpaid, all-purpose advisory committee, and I

don't know why I should trust the future of my community to such an unelected, unrepresentative, unaccountable body.

Far from being a direct line to the top, as the minister contends, it will be a bureaucratic nightmare. East York has a very high number of volunteers. How many people will volunteer after amalgamation? You have no mandate for amalgamation; no one's recommended it. It's not desirable. It's a disaster, and a disaster for Metro Toronto will eventually mean a disaster for the whole province.

Bill 103 must be withdrawn. I know it will be difficult for the government to back down. It will take courage but it can be done. For the love of our city, for the love of Ontario, think again.

Finally, although it's not part of Bill 103, I would like to add my dismay about the offloading to all municipalities of increased costs of health, social services, welfare and family benefits. The property tax base simply cannot cope with such costs, nor should it have to.

Here's a suggestion: Take education off the property tax base, as announced, but don't transfer any income support, social or health costs to the municipalities. The government can then take credit for a 50% cut in property taxes in lieu of the suggested 30% cut in income taxes.

Thank you for your attention. Here now are the grannies.

The Chair: Ladies, you have to come quickly and sit down in the chairs. I can't allow you to do it from the audience, and you can't have props, ma'am.

Ms Riley: We can't have props? We can't put our hats on?

The Chair: You can't have props, ladies. It's in order. You're coming down to three minutes.

Ms Riley: Can we just put our hats on, Mr Chairman?

The Chair: Sing your song, ladies, quickly. We have to go and vote.

Toronto Raging Grannies: Megacity, oh, what a mess
You will create here and so much distress,
Destroying the province along with the city.
No use in future to say, "What a pity."

Mr Harris! Give us a break!

Won't you admit now you've made a mistake?

It's not too late to stop Bill 103.

Say "goodbye" to megacity.

Megacity! What can we say?

We don't want one city. We don't want to pay.

We don't want appointees or trustees to rule us.

Dissing us all! Don't think you can fool us!

Mr Harris! Give us a break!

Won't you admit now you've made a mistake?

It's not too late to stop Bill 103.

Say "goodbye" to megacity.

The Chair: Ladies, I'm sorry to interrupt. We have to recess while we go to the House for a vote.

The committee recessed from 1613 to 1620.

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, please quickly come to order. We're going to have a lot of problems with time today. The bells are going to be ringing quite a bit. We're going to have to be up and down for votes, so the more orderly we are in here the more help it is and people will be able to hear the full presentations.

Speaking of full presentations, ladies, I understand you have a third verse. Go ahead.

Toronto Raging Grannies: Megacity! What an idea!

Property taxes will go up, that's clear.

Offloading of welfare, and health care, and others,

Transit, and programs for children and mothers.

Mr Harris! Give us a break!

Won't you admit now you've made a mistake?

It's not too late to stop Bill 103.

Say "goodbye" to megacity.

Megacity! And mega-change too!

Restructuring funding. It will be a zoo!

And nothing was broken, so why try to fix it?

Swallow your pride then.

Turn thumbs down and nix it!

Mr Harris! Give us a break!

Won't you admit now you've made a mistake?

It's not too late to stop Bill 103.

Say "goodbye" to megacity.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Riley, for coming forward, and, ladies, for your accompaniment.

BERNARD CHAMBERLAIN

The Chair: Would Bernard Chamberlain please come forward. Good afternoon, Mr Chamberlain, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Bernard Chamberlain: I thank the committee for allowing me to present at this committee meeting. My name is Bernard Chamberlain. I'm a resident of north Toronto and I'm a member of the Avenue Road and Eglinton Community Association. I've lived in Toronto for many years and brought up my children here.

Metro has been pretty successful. If you believe Fortune magazine, other people around the world think so too. We have an urban centre that is vibrant, safe, tolerant and visually appealing. It's also, by world standards, affordable. It, with the other Ontario urban centres, is a wealth generator for the province.

What seems to me the most pressing task of the province is the management of the huge area that forms the GTA, with its rapidly developing suburban and industrial areas spreading out far beyond Metro, with uncoordinated services and without a plan or vision of what this very beautiful and fertile area is to develop into.

The most promising recommendation made by the Who Does What committee is the formation of the Greater Toronto Services Board. Instead of following this, the provincial government is concentrating on forcing through Bill 103, a massive leap into the unknown.

The city's health is vital to the prosperity of the rest of the province. To preserve the city's quality of life and wealth-producing ability — and I suggest they are connected — it's necessary to keep the things that have made it work well and protect it from loss of its means to innovate and develop, and to protect the surrounding countryside from indiscriminate development.

In the proposed legislation, where is the vision? I would expect the province to provide the incentives, planning and controls to encourage urban renewal in Metro and managed development in the GTA. Instead we have a shortsighted plan to grab Metro's tax base to har-

vest the city's wealth. This is done in the most cowardly and dictatorial way: first, by seizing control of the elected municipal governments by installing an unelected junta, thereby suspending democracy; then in reducing citizen representation in Metro in municipal affairs to the lowest level in the province; thirdly, by hamstringing the future megacity government by denying it control of its budgets through holding back essential moneys in reserve funds controlled by the provincial government.

Is this going to work? At the start of these hearings Minister Leach predicted big savings. Apart from the \$400 million to \$1 billion in startup costs, and while some members of the government have been candid that there are no assurances of savings from amalgamation, many studies show the opposite experience. The new megacity council will have to manage over 100,000 existing bylaws based on the present boundaries — this is provided by the bill — in addition to the new bylaws that it will have to enact. This is a recipe for chaos.

There has been enough information revealed by the press in the short time since Bill 103 was announced about experiences in urban areas in other parts of the world that equate the structure proposed in Bill 103 with higher costs, fewer services, higher taxes, minimized local representation, urban decay and hollowing out of the city core. Am I to believe the provincial government doesn't care? Is it of no consequence to them because what they want is to control the Metro tax base and, cynically, provide a means for funding an income tax reduction?

I am appalled that there is no glimmer of vision for preserving the quality of life in this great city and the surrounding rural areas by the provincial government, and certainly not in Bill 103. Even the Greater Toronto Services Board, the cornerstone of the Who Does What committee, seems to be abandoned.

The megacity is not the only proposal, it's not the only alternative. Ward and city boundaries can be re-evaluated and the municipal tax system certainly can be updated and made more equitable. But to leap into the unknown by throwing out completely the structures that have been developed over many years, by a hastily drawn-up, 20-page, patently flawed document, can destroy forever this great city and change it from a generator of wealth into a financial liability.

I plead with this committee to search for alternatives and a radical change to Bill 103 — and preferably to scrap it — a change that leaves the democratic process of this city in place. I encourage wholeheartedly putting in place a fair and stable property tax system but one that does not give an incentive to abandon the city in favour of development of rural areas. Lastly, I strongly support a determined attempt at coordinating services in the GTA.

1630

Mr Sergio: Thank you for making a presentation to our committee. Mr Chamberlain, when the legislation was introduced, both the Premier and Mr Leach, either defending their legislation or promoting their legislation, said this would reduce taxes, save a lot of money, make the system more efficient and of course reduce politicians. We have been asking in the House, especially our leader, to be provided with that information, with what-

ever reports, secret reports, back up their contention that this will be more effective, will save money, will lower taxes and so forth.

We have not been able to get any information from the government. It is our contention the bill should not proceed until we have all that information. Was is your view with respect to that?

Mr Chamberlain: Certainly, the bill provides none of that information and from what I hear around the city it's information people need. People were most upset by the fact that the bill was introduced just before Christmas, which took away a considerable amount of time for people to get organized, to find information, to react to the bill, and I feel that there isn't enough information. The information is coming from outside, from people comparing with large centres in other parts of the world and we're not getting hard information from the Ontario government.

Mr Sergio: Do you feel this is a big enough issue to hold a binding referendum on this issue?

Mr Chamberlain: Yes, very definitely.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Chamberlain.

MARY CLARK

The Chair: Would Mary Clark please come forward. Good afternoon.

Mrs Mary Clark: Mr Chairman and committee members, I am speaking to you today about the megacity, Bill 103, not only to express my own views, but also those of my husband, Clive Clark, who planned to speak separately but is out of the province on business.

We are architects and urban planners who are gravely concerned about the effects of Bill 103 and other so-called commonsense measures on the quality of life in the city of Toronto. This city was our birthplace 60 years ago and over the years has become a unique, stimulating and civilized environment in which to live, work and raise a family. We attribute this quality of living to the democratic evolution of a government structure that responds to the values and concerns of citizens and businesses locating here, while pursuing goals of efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Over the years we have seen the evolution of local Metro governance, the amalgamation of small communities with the city, the formation of Metropolitan Toronto and, in the 1980s, the move to directly elected local and Metro councillors. While these developments in the management of Metro and its municipalities were not always popular, the details of the planned action and vision of the resulting effects were available for public knowledge, open to public discussion and referenda. They were not simply imposed by a provincial government through trustees and a transition team making decisions behind closed doors in the guise of common sense.

To us, Bill 103 is simply outrageous in its disrespect for due process and democratic procedures that have been inherent in the historical development of Toronto. This bill provides no opportunity for the general public to understand, discuss, debate and react to the actual changes developed by trustees behind closed doors before they are imposed by the transition team on the current quality of life in the city of Toronto.

It takes away the democratic and discretionary powers of not only our currently elected representatives but also of the proposed megacity council by giving overriding powers to a few provincially appointed trustees, transition team members, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier, without any recourse to justice through the courts.

It freezes our taxpayer reserve funds and gives the provincial rulers of our destiny the right to restrict future budgets and taxation measures for the funding of services to our cities. In short, it replaces municipal democracy with a form of provincial dictatorship that, in our view, is morally corrupt and an insult to all citizens.

Secondly, the taxpayers have already paid for several reports on proposals for restructuring government and services in the GTA. We have had the Golden report, the Crombie commission, the mayors' report and the KPMG report.

The first two reports were based on comprehensive non-partisan studies by professionals who have been active in municipal and provincial planning for decades and who understand that the quality of urban life is a very complex matter and not merely a product of cost-effectiveness, while the KPMG report was hastily crafted to support the partisan theory behind Bill 103. Since all these reports contain different ideas on how restructuring might be beneficial, our common sense tells us that the next step should be to bring these experts together to develop, with extensive public input, a consensus on an overall plan for government within the GTA.

In lieu of an overall vision for the GTA, Tory politicians have hastily and simplistically seized upon the megacity concept as a quick method for having the appearance of meeting cost-cutting promises by the time of the next election. I emphasize the word "appearance" because there are many opinions that amalgamations into megacities do not lead to cost reductions. Some opinions even suggest that the major cost-savings will be found at the regional or GTA levels of governance.

Furthermore, the more personal and quality-of-life costs to citizens are still unknown and omitted from the equation. It really rankles us to see Premier Harris on TV simplistically buffaloeing uninformed taxpayers into believing that substantial tax savings will be coming their way with no mention of how the quality of these taxpayers' lives may be affected.

How does the megacity concept of Bill 103 intend to preserve the distinctive quality of life and values inherent to each local municipality with a political system where each municipality will have a minority position on mega-decisions and mega-budgeting?

We have already witnessed this situation at our Metro level of government where the transit-oriented city of Toronto can be outvoted by road-oriented suburban cities on transportation and development issues that are critical to the quality of life in the inner city.

Now other questions arise:

Will user fees for park and recreational facilities be applied uniformly without regard for social benefits?

Will public support for the arts decline to current suburban levels?

Will the quality of services decline to a homogeneous level throughout the megacity so that they neither respond to specific needs nor preserve the standards that led to residents and businesses locating there?

Without even considering the looming effects of AVA, actual value assessment, will the mere actualization of megacity values have a detrimental effect on property values?

Will our local city centres, when stripped away of any political significance and activity, become unkempt, lifeless holes in our urban landscape? Or will the Toronto city hall be sold to McDonald's and have its skating rink arches painted yellow?

To date, these questions and many others affecting the quality of life remain unanswered. Bill 103 excludes any opportunity for public forums on these types of issues.

Nor does the Tory plan have any criteria for the restructuring of local functions that address any personal costs to citizens imposed by megacity thinking. These costs include increased travel time and cost to reach centralized locations, more volunteer time required to sit on yet another neighbourhood committee, reduced access to political representatives due to their increased workload, and many others.

We have already experienced the closure of the only vehicle accident reporting centre in the city of Toronto, which I am told is due to Metro police cutbacks. If this and other types of services are no longer affordable in the centre of Metro where you live, why live there?

We are very concerned that the megacity proposal will lead to citizen apathy towards municipal government and to lack of respect for established laws that maintain the civility and quality of life that are a feature of our local cities. People may become tempted to take the law into their own hands. If times get rough, residents and businesses will move out of the area if they can afford to. The quality of life in Metro, and particularly the inner city, must be preserved if they are to retain their vitality and international reputation.

The current frenzy associated with the passing of Bill 103 and other related, far-reaching legislation has been likened to a corporate takeover. We believe this is the Tory strategy and we find it flies in the face of democracy and the rights of local citizens.

Please, either scrap Bill 103, or at the very least extend the time lines and open the process so that a vision of consensus can be properly developed that will ensure not only cost-effective management, but also citizen effectiveness, support and respect.

Mr Silipo: Just very briefly, Ms Clark, the words you've used are fairly strong. You refer to the trusteeship as "provincial dictatorship," but the noticeable thing is that in fact those are words we are hearing more and more from average citizens as they look at what's going on.

The only question I really have of you is, do you think the referendum is at least a way that will allow not just the public obviously to express its view, but the government to finally take a look and say, "Maybe if the people really don't believe this is the right thing to do, this is at least the way we can show we are listening to some extent."

Mrs Clark: Frankly, I'm worried about the referendum, because I believe with all this television advertising that's going on out there, as I mentioned in my presentation, people are getting false ideas that they're going to get reductions in their taxes and that they're going to be substantial, and they have no idea how this is going to affect their lives.

I'm worried that there are too many people out there who are uninformed and not aware of what they're going to be voting on. That really worries me because I think the people who are informed understand and, yes, therefore they can vote on the referendum however they wish to, but from the point of view of the majority of our citizens, who don't have time to be informed — they're at work, probably two people in each family working all day, children to take care of and so on — they don't have time to understand, attend meetings like this and listen to what's happening. I am frankly very worried that the referendum — I would love to have a binding referendum, but I am wondering whether it's going to really be representative of an informed opinion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Silipo, and thank you, Ms Clark. We're in recess until after the vote.

The committee recessed from 1645 to 1656.

FIONA NELSON

The Chair: Would Fiona Nelson please come forward. Ladies and gentlemen, let's quickly come to order. We need to hear from Ms Nelson. I'd like your undivided attention, please.

Ms Fiona Nelson: Mr Chair and ladies and gentlemen of the committee, thank you very much for hearing me on Bill 103. On Bill 103, you're going to hear a great many deputations using a lot of adjectives that you may not like. I must say, when I read it, I tried to see if I could find any unconstitutional wrinkles to it. I couldn't, but it is, in my opinion, very bad public policy.

I've been a resident of Toronto since 1956 in the same house, and since 1969 I have been elected nine times to the Toronto Board of Education. I've also been on the board of health and the planning board, the historical board and the Metro school board so I've been involved in the city of Toronto for quite a while. I've been representing a ward called Midtown, which is a very interesting part of the city. It goes from Bloor Street up to Eglinton and from the Don River over to Christie Street. It is the middle of town.

It's a very interesting place because it's a collection of villages really that manage to maintain a great deal of their own identity and integrity while working very closely together. It is also an extremely politically active part of the city. For example, in the next two and a half weeks there will be 17 meetings in the ward on the subject of Bill 103, and I suspect that shortly thereafter there will be another 17 on Bill 104.

It's very interesting to me that while we have a written Constitution in this country, we also in the British tradition have a very big unwritten constitution which is a sort of social contract between generations, gradually improving the political and social life of the country and of our municipalities and, between generations, attempt-

ing to make sure that our democracy is made stronger and stronger. It worries me very much that this bill is significantly weakening the democratic structures in the city and virtually taking over local government, which to me is the real strength of the democracy in this country.

I know by the time these hearings are over you are going to have read so much stuff that you won't want to see anything in print for a month. But I would recommend, if you are interested in it, this book called *Making Democracy Work* by Robert Putnam. It is a fascinating study he did of what he called "civic" and "uncivic" communities in Italy. The little old cities of northern Italy are very civic communities, according to him, because they have a vast number of voluntary groups and associations that cross class barriers and various other things, which make those cities very cohesive, working very well, and incidentally are not expensive.

It seems to me that change, to be effective, requires the consent of the people, and the proposed change to help achieve that consensus requires experts who agree. Neither of these conditions has been met with Bill 103, and it seems to me that we are entering into a period that is very dangerous for the democracy of this society and for the life of this city. Having lived in Toronto for over 40 years, according to Putnam and other people who do a lot of thinking about this, this is a very civic society, and it's not a recent thing.

If you go back 100 years there was in this city a movement that produced a strong civic tradition that didn't permit public squalor. For example, the medical officer of health then worked very hard to bring in sewage treatment, water treatment, pasteurization of milk, slum clearances, in the interests of the health of the public. That tradition in the board of health has continued since and up till the present time.

When AIDS first became a problem in the 1980s, I was on the board of health then, as I am now, as well as the board of education, and the MOH and the health authorities in the city of Toronto came forward with a plan for public education to prevent AIDS. It was going to cost \$11 million. We passed it at the board of health and convinced city council to fund it, and this was at a time when North York was convinced there was no AIDS in North York. I'm not sure whether Hoggs Hollow was an impermeable barrier or what, but that was the case.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s when we went into a recession and we were seeing a great many hungry children in the schools, the board of health and the board of education jointly entered into a school feeding program and they jointly funded it and it continues to this day, some very good health programs and feeding programs in the schools, and that kind of cooperation between the board of health and the board of education is something that I think is extremely significant in the city of Toronto. There are a great many other instances.

I'm quite convinced, for example, once again, that the ward I represent, which is a hotbed of political activity, was extremely resistant to the Spadina Expressway and I suspect a great deal of the energy to stop it came from that area, particularly from the Annex. The board of education saw the implications of slicing the city in half with an expressway. When Mr Davis and the cabinet

finally put a stop to it, I remember at that time we had blocked off Yonge Street with a pedestrian mall and we had a dance from College Street down to Queen. I can't quite conceive of that sort of thing happening in a great, huge city where there is such a split between the pedestrian-conscious city and the car-conscious suburbs.

When Mr Crombie was the mayor in the 1970s and brought in that utterly irrational idea called the 40-foot height bylaw, which held all development until the central area plan had been developed, the city council hired dozens and dozens of planners and assigned them to local neighbourhoods so those neighbourhoods could develop part 2 plans under the central area plan, a very interesting and unusual process that involved hundreds and hundreds of citizens in actually planning the ambience of the city. I think that those things last till this day. The idea of community planning committees seemed unusual at the time but I think it has had a tremendous payoff.

It seems to me that if we're going to build a civic society, we're going to build a society where people care about one another. It worries me very much that the political climate in North America, certainly at the moment, is one that Mario Cuomo called one that made compassion something we could dispense with, and I think that at the basis of a sense of community and a community that cares there has to be that kind of compassion.

A couple of years ago my house was burgled. At first I thought a raccoon had broken in the door and then I realized that it had been something stronger. But the police came very quickly and dealt with things to the best of their ability. While they were still there, my next-door neighbour came over and said, "Would you like to come over for a cup of tea and do you want to spend the night?" I said, "I'd love the cup of tea but my cat is too upset, I have to sleep here tonight."

Just as soon as the police left, the young man who had just moved in across the street came over and said, "It's none of my business, but what happened?" and I told him, and he said: "I've got a black belt and here's my phone number. If you're worried about things, call me any time." I was working out in my garden, and in the city of Toronto we have sidewalks, which means people walk around a lot. A couple of older men up the street who are lamp makers came by and they said, "We heard you had a burglary and you didn't call us." I think that sense of community in a neighbourhood is really quite wonderful.

The neighbourhood I live in is one that has been under constant threat from development for decades. One of the former presidents of our ratepayers was Roy McMurtry, and we fought a huge development just to the south of where we live during his reign. I've also been president of that ratepayers. The interesting thing about it is that we've got a telephone tree; we can get around the neighbourhood in about half an hour to about 1,000 households; we can raise money. I suspect we've been to the OMB more often than many lawyers because of the place we live. This gives us a wonderful sense of cohesion and community and commonality of purpose and it seems to me that's what makes Toronto work.

All the research I have read says that Toronto is at the absolute top size of a city that can work in that way. It's tragic to think of losing that to no gain that I have been able to see. I've been on the city of Toronto assessment reform committee for 10 years. We have tried, even under freedom of information, to get some of the impact studies to do with this work and we have been unable to do it. It seems to me that if we don't have a consensus among the people — and certainly we don't. Last night at the South Rosedale ratepayers meeting I attended in Rosedale United Church, where their sitting member of the Legislature didn't show up, they were talking about recall —

The Chair: Ms Nelson, I apologize for interrupting you. You'll have to wrap up.

Ms Nelson: All right. The people there were solidly opposed to what is happening. This has been the case in every one of the meetings I have attended so far in my ward. I want to tell you that we want the city to survive, we want it to stay prosperous and healthy, we want it to be a civic society, and to do that we need your help to burn this bill.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

VI THOMPSON

The Chair: Would Vi Thompson please come forward? Welcome.

Vi Thompson: Thank you very much. I live in an apartment building for seniors. I asked my neighbours, "What do you think of this amalgamation of all the municipalities in Toronto?" They said, "Smaller is better; big is not good." One person said: "I lived in the city of Toronto. I called city hall and asked a question. They said, 'We'll get back to you.' I never heard from them again." That's thinking that the city of Toronto already is much too big. I live in East York and I call the civic centre and what happens? My questions are answered immediately. One person said to me: "I lived in Scarborough. I come to East York and the feeling in the air is different. Why, the mayor even comes to visit our apartment building. That couldn't possibly happen in megacity."

Then I looked in my dictionary. My dictionary defines "democracy" as "government of the people, either directly or by elected representatives," and "the acceptance of equality of opportunity and treatment." This standing committee has the semblance of democracy but it is not giving equal treatment to each municipality affected by this legislation. It has refused to go to the different municipalities. Just think: on TV I've watched this committee working. I have not seen anyone from Etobicoke or Scarborough or North York. I have seen people from Toronto and I understand there have been other people here from East York, but why was it impossible to go to these different communities so that more people could have representation and speak about their concerns? When reports go back to the government, will the government heed what the people have done? The committee has a limited time for hearings. That means that a great many people who would like to speak to this committee will be unable to do so.

Now I come to East York. East York is democratic. The council meets every second Monday of the month. What happens is that the first item of the agenda of that meeting is always deputations. Deputations come and they are heard until there are no more deputations. The rest of the agenda of East York council is done after deputations are finished. I have been one of the many deputants who have been there. I have spoken on questions like pesticides, on parks, recreation areas.

1710

One of the last things we did with the East York peace and environment committee — we're concerned about the environment and we wanted to do one little thing that perhaps would help to change the environment for the better. We went to East York and said, "When cars are moving along O'Connor Drive westward, sometimes some of them want to turn right and go up Don Mills Road, but they can't turn and they're idling and that makes more pollution for the atmosphere" because they're there idling at the corner waiting to turn the corner. We said, "East York, could you please make that point at Don Mills and O'Connor Drive a 'right lane must turn'?" It happened, it works and now the cars go around the corner. The people going west continue in the inside lane. So it works.

Other deputants have been there. Sometimes they go again and again, saying, "Yes, I know I've been here before but there's something I want to add about what I told you last time." They're always heard politely and listened to and concerned. Sometimes the council decides to send the business to committee and the person who is making the deputation is allowed to go to the committee hearings. East York has a very democratic method of working. Councillors are available. Although my councillor is a part-time worker, I call him and he is there, available to answer my questions. The mayor is available.

East York is efficient. I think it would be impossible for megacity to be as efficient as this small borough is — small in relation to Metro; in reality it is quite a large municipality, larger than many. I'm not quite sure of the number, but I think it's somewhere about the 10th-largest municipality in the whole of Ontario, or 17th, something like that, but quite a large municipality in comparison with much of Ontario. Yet it works; it is efficient; it has streamlined services; there is a small staff.

East York is financially responsible. The municipal portion of taxes has not been increased for four consecutive years in spite of the fact that revenues from the provincial government have decreased by 57% since 1992. This is the fourth year of increased business building permits in the borough. East York is working. The capital projects are funded from current revenues leaving the borough debt-free. It will still be debt-free in the year 2000. East York is accessible. Call the mayor and he will respond. Call your councillor and he will answer you.

East York has a great many volunteers. In fact, about one in seven people living there is a volunteer in some form or other; for the whole of Ontario, it's maybe one in 10. We have a great many volunteers. This is one of the reasons East York works so well. Another reason so

many volunteers are there is the sense of community we share. Or should I ask, do the volunteers come because we have a sense of community? They work together. It is our community and we care about it.

Knowing all the parts of East York, it makes it my home. I know East York from Leaside, the little bit of East York that is close to Rosedale, the other side of the Don Valley Parkway; I know it in Thorncliffe; I know it all the way to Victoria Park. It's a place I can relate to. I think of FODEY, one of the many community groups in East York. FODEY is a small group concerned about environmental things; its name means Friends of the Don of East York. They are working to keep the Don clean and every park area and every space of that kind in East York.

In East York on July 1 we celebrate Canada Day together. We have an enormous celebration. We have a parade with floats. There are booths in the Stan Wadlow park where the different community groups come and make their presentations and show the kind of things they're active in. Services are there: The police are there and the fire department, showing the kinds of work that are done. There are competitions, there are displays of all kinds, and of course there's lots of food to eat. The library is there. You can get secondhand books — all kinds of things. It's a great deal of festivities. You meet your neighbours, you have a picnic, and at the end of the day there's a great fireworks display.

Megacity cannot give me what I have in East York. It would be impossible to do this in the great amalgamation of our municipalities. I beg you to keep East York as a working municipality, working for its people.

The Chair: Thank you, ma'am. We have about two minutes left for a government caucus question.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): Good to have you here this afternoon. Thank you for helping with our process. I just want to touch on your story about the right-turn lane at O'Connor and Don Mills Road. Those are both Metro roads.

Vi Thompson: That's right. East York had to take it to Metro first, but it was done very quickly.

Mr Parker: Yes. It's been expressed to me that one of the downsides to the proposal for a megacity is that the outlying areas will lack the appreciation of the needs and concerns of the local communities, that the suburban outlying districts have an interest that is averse to and different from the interest of the urban area. I'll put East York in the urban area of this duality. The example you give suggests that this is a case where Metro was persuaded to give East York and the citizens of East York something that was valuable to them, of a strictly local nature. Can you comment on that?

Vi Thompson: Because it's a Metro road, it's scarcely of a particular local nature; otherwise it would not be a Metro road, it would be an East York road. It's not, it's a Metro road, meaning —

Mr Parker: No, but the concern was brought forth by residents of East York and it was —

Vi Thompson: Our concern was about pollution.

Mr Parker: You put it forward to us as an example of East York's responsiveness to the needs and the concerns of the people of East York.

Vi Thompson: To the needs and concerns and also to concern about the pollution of the atmosphere in East York.

Mr Parker: But this was a decision that was made by Metro, so that suggests to me that, in this case at any rate, Metro gave you the kind of service you were looking for. Here's Metro, that represents the entire area, all 2.3 million people in this urban district.

Vi Thompson: But Metro is not megacity. It's a different thing altogether.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs Thompson, for coming forward and making your presentation.

The committee stands recessed until after the vote in the House.

The committee recessed from 1718 to 1727.

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, let's please come to order. Would everyone please take their seats or take their conversations out in the hall.

ANNA LOU LITTLE

The Chair: Anna Little.

Ms Anna Lou Little: Where are the members of the committee?

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): We're just getting back from a vote. They're rushing back.

Ms Little: Shall I wait for them?

The Chair: No, you'd better begin.

Ms Little: I'd better get started? Okay.

The Chair: Yes. Sorry.

Ms Little: Mr Maves, member of the committee, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to you. Please excuse me for reading my comments.

My name is Anna Lou Little. I raised my family in downtown Toronto, where I have lived for over 30 years. I am a homeowner, a social worker, a community volunteer and a citizen. I care deeply for my city.

Yesterday I was in this room and heard six speakers talking about their city and its governance. I was struck by their diversity, their richness of experience, their eloquence, their expertise and the determined dignity they brought to these hearings. I avoid public speaking if at all possible, but I feel compelled to add my voice to those of my fellow citizens.

To amalgamate the six municipalities didn't make sense to Anne Golden or David Crombie. To quote Anne Golden, "The present Metro two-tiered system should be adapted and extended to meet the needs of the new city region." The amalgamation of Metro Toronto in no way emerged as a viable option. So why do it?

I haven't read anything that convinces me that the megacity will save money without reducing services or firing workers — my taxes will not be reduced — or that one big, remote city government can respond as well to local needs. I'm told that this change will bring a better future. Who for?

Not covered in this bill but related is the downloading of welfare and health services on local government. Even the board of trade objects to this inappropriate measure, which would cripple communities and reduce services when they are most needed.

After reading Bill 103, I am particularly distressed by the way this megacity is to be achieved. Even those who don't have a problem with amalgamation find the process flawed and, I believe, ultimately dangerous. The appointment of trustees and then a transition team to control our local elected representatives for an undetermined period of time, accountable to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, not to our elected representatives, is unacceptable.

Particularly odious is that the decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court. They are protected from any personal liability for their actions. This lack of accountability and shackling of our elected local councils, the one government where people really do have a direct say in the running of their city is dangerous. These measures display a complete lack of trust and contempt for our elected officials who represent me.

For a number of years I was on my residents' association steering committee, an elected body. I felt our voice was valued and acted upon, when possible, by our councillors. Local traffic, parking, safety, noise, policing: These were some of the issues which interested our neighbourhood. How can one councillor for roughly 50,000 people be able to respond to our needs or even interact with us? The proposed neighbourhood committees are being appointed by city council. Who are they accountable to? I was directly accountable to my community, not city hall.

I have already heard two women beautifully describe the complicated process necessary to gain access to their megacity government. There is no need for me to repeat this.

I would like to give you a specific example of how our residents' steering committee operated. In response to people's concern about the heavy traffic, we designed and put forth a traffic maze plan for our area. We studied the traffic flow, responding to the streets with the highest number of cars, the location of schools, safety, concerns of parents etc.

We thought our plan was terrific. We worked with our councillors and called a public meeting. It was raucous and passionate. It interfered with the citizens' daily living. Metro didn't like the plan because it interfered with Palmerston. The result: People voted against it. It didn't get implemented. But over the years, a traffic light here, a traffic light there, some traffic calming techniques added — all acceptable to the community. Yes, it was frustrating. Yes, it took a lot of time, but it didn't divide our community or ignore its citizens. I'm sure I don't need to spell out what I'm saying.

In my experience, the current system works well and people have a voice in the affairs of their community, a link that must not be lost.

On March 3, there will be a referendum and all citizens will have their chance to speak. To ignore their wishes is to ignore democracy. To say that these referenda don't count is unbelievable. I completely agree with Mary Clark, who spoke to you earlier on the point that the public needs to be informed and have access to unbiased information. I look to you to make that possible.

I request that Bill 103 be withdrawn and that you, as legislators, take the time to re-examine this bill in light of what you have heard, along with the results of the coming referendum. Use the many resources you already possess, the studies, the voices of Toronto, your skills as legislators to build a better Toronto for all people. Don't be bound by party politics but by your commitment to the common good and the knowledge that Toronto is the best city to live in.

Do not squander or silence the real wealth of Toronto, the voices of a diverse and vibrant community, committed voices who want to participate in the governance and quality of their lives.

The Chair: Thank you very much. You've effectively used your 10 minutes. We appreciate you coming forward to the committee this morning.

ANTHONY RAPOPORT

The Chair: Would Anthony Rapoport please come forward. Good afternoon, Mr Rapoport. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Anthony Rapoport: I'd like to start by describing just a couple of examples of my experience of local government.

I'm a professional musician and a founding member of the Aradia Baroque Ensemble and the Toronto Classical Players. When Aradia was founded in 1995, we approached Mayor Barbara Hall of Toronto to ask her for help in being able to use the old St Lawrence Hall at King and Jarvis, which is a city of Toronto facility, for our first public performance. She helped us arrange to have access to the facility at very little cost. As a result of this performance, Aradia gained an international recording contract with Naxos records, a number of subscribers for our first season and some favourable press reviews.

We are contributing to the cultural life of our city. We're generating wealth in our city and we're gaining international recognition which reflects well on our city and on Canada. We're in the midst of our second full season at St Lawrence Hall, for which, ever since that first concert, we've paid full market rent. We feel proud of the work we've done and grateful to Mayor Hall for her help, a rather small thing, in helping us get started.

The Toronto Classical Players is at an earlier stage of its development. Last fall, we gave one of our first public performances at the Etobicoke Fall Arts Festival. The festival provided us with an excellent venue, publicity in its festival brochure and administration for ticket sales, all of which were beyond our means, and we were very grateful to Etobicoke for that help in starting up our musical group.

These are just a couple of examples that in my view show that local government works when it's small enough to care.

Next, I'd like to move to a specific aspect of Bill 103 that I'm particularly concerned about. It's not the only aspect I'm concerned about, but when I was preparing my remarks based on what I've seen in the papers about what you've heard already, I didn't think this was adequately brought up so far. This afternoon I have heard a number

of speakers talk about it very well, so I'll try to keep my comments about it brief.

You may have a copy of my notes that refer specifically to the bill. I'd like to read this — it's just a few sections — because I'd like to be very specific about what I think the problem is on this aspect.

Sections 9 and 16 provide for the appointment of a board of trustees and a transition team.

Subsections 9(10) and 16(12) leave the continued existence of the board of trustees and the transition team, beyond January 1998, completely at the discretion of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

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Clause 24(1)(e) allows the minister to prescribe duties for the trustees and the transition team in addition to those stated in the act. Clauses 9(6)(a) and 16(5)(a) require all elected officials, board members and employees, both of our current municipalities and of the proposed new municipality, to comply with the requests of the trustees and the transition team. Sections 12 and 18 place the actions of the trustees and the transition team beyond the reach of the courts.

Minister Leach is attempting to create a power base for himself above the law. This is completely unacceptable. The only basis of legitimacy for the exercise of political power is the rule of law. I hope we all agree on that, because to disagree is extremely dangerous.

Minister Leach has said that accountability is one of his justifications for the amalgamation. There is no way that accountability is compatible with operations that are outside the rule of law. There is no accountability where you don't have public access to some kind of process of review of the decisions of the powerful. I think that what Minister Leach meant by greater accountability was that the new city council will be more accountable to him than our current municipal governments. That is not public accountability. In fact it's the opposite.

Now I'd like to go on to my concerns about the process by which Bill 103 is being enacted. I was in the Legislature when the Speaker ruled that the government was in contempt of the Legislature because of its pamphlet, which described its intentions in regard to amalgamation without regard for the legislative process. I think I should remind the government that the opposition members of the Legislature are not there as some kind of concession to minority political opinion. My representative, Mr Silipo, did not lose the last provincial election. He won the election, defeating, among others, a Progressive Conservative candidate. When you show contempt for the Legislature, when you show contempt for my representation in the Legislature, you show contempt for me.

Premier Mike Harris has said that the unanimous opposition of the six mayors to amalgamation is self-serving. All of these mayors were elected. Many of them have been elected to multiple terms. That means they have run on the basis of their records in office and been returned by the public, a test which the current provincial government has not yet faced.

Mayor Hall was directly elected in a large city. I haven't compared the figures myself, but my guess is that she probably received many more votes than any member of the provincial Legislature, including the Premier. To

say that Mayor Hall is self-serving when in fact she is serving and representing me is to say that I do not exist. To show contempt for the mayor of Toronto when she is performing her duties is to show contempt for Toronto; it's to show contempt for me as a resident of Toronto.

According to the *Globe and Mail*, both Mr Harris and Mr Leach have said they are unwilling to consider any major changes to Bill 103 as a result of this hearing process. In my opinion, government members of this committee, this shows contempt for you and for me and for everyone who participates in this process.

I'd like to remind you at this point that you are not employees of the government. You are not employees of the Progressive Conservative party. You are representatives of the residents of your ridings with a responsibility to the people of Ontario, and in this case a special responsibility to the people of Metropolitan Toronto.

I'd like you to consider whether you feel contempt for me or whether you're simply committed to following orders. I'd like you to consider whether you feel contempt for yourself, or whether you're simply committed to following orders.

I would like you, at the end of these hearings, to recommend that Bill 103 be withdrawn, or to recommend that a negotiation process be begun involving the province and the seven municipalities with the aim at arriving at consensus on the future of local government here. If the government ignores your recommendations, I would strongly urge you to cross the floor and vote against Bill 103.

I realize that this is a very rare and difficult procedure or decision for a member in our parliamentary system, with its great tradition, its long tradition, of party loyalty. But you have the opportunity to be heroes in the history of the struggle for democracy in Toronto. I strongly urge you to consider your responsibility very carefully. This decision might very well be difficult for you, but as you heard yesterday, we are willing to support you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Rapoport, for your presentation. You've come to the end of your time.

BEVERLEY DANIELS

The Chair: Would Beverley Daniels please come forward. Good afternoon, Ms Daniels.

Ms Beverley Daniels: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here in part because I value the city I live in and in part because I value all the democratic elements of the society I live in. How could I stay silent when either of these is endangered? Therefore, I'm here to speak on three related topics: the preservation of the city, the overburdening of that city with social service responsibility, and the erosion of democracy.

I appreciate the city of Toronto so keenly because I know what it's like to grow up in a place that is not well governed. As children growing up in an incipient suburb outside Metro, my sisters and I could not walk anywhere without the possibility of harassment from men no one seemed to know who might linger on the roadsides and in other public areas. After several such incidents, our movement in the community was limited to the little cluster of houses where we lived, for there was no public

transit. The nearest library was many miles away. It was a dull and dangerous place, a place no one seemed to care about or be able to defend. The local government was unresponsive to the needs of its citizens.

When I visited relatives in Toronto, I was envious because of the freedom with which they moved about the city on cheap public transit, visiting libraries, swimming pools and parks, all free. I resolved that when I grew up I would live there too. As an adult living in Toronto, I have indeed appreciated the libraries and the rec centres. In additional contrast to the place where I grew up, here I have experienced little harassment from strangers. Our lovely, densely populated downtown neighbourhoods, with their houses facing closely on the streets, tend to protect their pedestrians from threat of bodily harm, but they tend to protect us also from the social harm that arises when people hunker down behind their garages and venture out into the street only encased behind their windshields, avoiding all meaningful contact with any fellow human beings they don't know by name.

I fear that in an amalgamated city these attributes that make the city's core an attractive place to live will disappear because the voices of those who value them will be drowned out by the clamour of the suburban majority. I would like to offer here a simple illustration of the difference between city and suburb.

I'm a cyclist. When I ride about the city doing errands and so forth, I'm reasonably safe because drivers in this city are accustomed to accommodating cyclists. It has not always been so, however. Bicycle-user groups formed and over time they were able to influence city council to take steps to affect traffic's movement on city roads to make it safer.

1750

You may think this is a frivolous or insignificant example of successful local politics. However, bicycle use improves the air quality and makes it easier to get around. Contrast this accommodation of bicycles in the city to the situation in the suburbs, where there is nowhere to dependably lock your bike and where the drivers often honk at cyclists when they are making legal and reasonable use of the roads.

Suburbs are designed to accommodate cars. Their very structure makes cycling difficult. Furthermore, most people who choose to live in the suburbs are happy with this structure and would oppose any change that would make cycling easier, for these changes would make driving more difficult. No amount of raising political awareness about this situation would make much of an impact.

This has been just one example of the difference between urban and suburban ways of life. There are others: the mixed use of neighbourhoods, which intensifies and extends the hours of their use and thus makes them enjoyable and safe. The structure of old-style main streets, the storefront facing directly on the sidewalks, enables and encourages pedestrians to explore small stores, small businesses that would have too low a profile to attract the interest of a suburban shopper busily driving by. Diversity, so important to a strong local economy, is buttressed by the very physical surroundings of a traditional city.

I could cite many more examples of the conflict of values between older cities and suburban-style ones. The

boundaries between the municipality of Toronto and its more sprawling neighbours are not artificial; they are politically meaningful and they need to remain.

Make no mistake: Toronto has been recognized by business publications as one of the best places in North America for investment because its quality of life makes it stable and thriving. A major reason for the city's attractiveness to investors is the same as the reason it's attractive to its inhabitants: Its separate municipal governments have been able to be responsive to the needs and respectful of the values of their citizens. A megacity government could not be responsive to all those it is supposed to represent.

If you tamper with local government as it stands, you tamper with the health of the city. If the city is healthy, it strengthens the province. If the city is sick, it becomes a heavy burden on the province, one that the province will not be able to escape, try though it might. Downloading on to the city expensive social services like welfare and homes for aged will not ultimately protect you from their cost. We all will pay the price as business moves out of Toronto and ultimately Ontario, and crime moves in to fill the vacuum.

You may invest thousands of dollars of citizens' money to pay for print and video advertising appealing to foreign investors, but why not put that money where it has been — in the service of fairness and democracy — and let the investment appeal take care of itself?

A city is a like a furnace in the house that is the province. If you, the house's custodians, turn down the heat or refuse to pay the fuel bills, you do so at the peril of all the inhabitants of the house, including yourselves.

The responsibility of government involves recognizing the dangers not only of wasting public funds, but also of refusing to spend tax money to safeguard basic shared values. If you, as an elected government, do not discern that democracy is a basic value, then the voters can only conclude that you have striven to get yourselves elected for much more cynical reasons, and that if respect for democracy is in the way of these purposes, you would not hesitate to push it out of your way.

You might protest that your aim is efficiency, that the megacity will be streamlined and less expensive. Other city amalgamations have shown that's not true. But even if it were true, surely to sacrifice democracy to ensure efficiency is to get it backwards. Democracy is worth time, money and effort. Let's sacrifice some efficiency to ensure democracy.

However, I believe it may be true that you hold democracy in low esteem. Consider section 9 of the proposed legislation, which provides for appointed trustees, their salaries paid by us, the citizens, to monitor the councils we elected. Further, section 12 states that no court may review the decisions of these trustees. Surely this means these trustees, who are not permitted to speak to us, are above the law.

Finally, section 13 provides for an appointed transition team to control and monitor taxation and spending decisions made by a newly elected council of a newly amalgamated city. Why bother with elections at all then?

Democracy is precious and challenging. I urge you to face up to it and protect it.

The Chair: Thank you very much. There's about a quick minute left for the Liberal caucus. Mr Kennedy, very quick, please.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I wonder if you have any feelings about the government's haste in this matter in terms of what it does to your sense of the place you live in and what you'd like to see.

Ms Daniels: I feel that the government introduced this legislation just before Christmas, when most people were very busy and then pushed it through in great haste, as if there was a war on and we needed the War Measures Act. Because it's such a momentous decision, we really need time to think about this, talk about this and work it out among ourselves so that we know how we feel. I feel it's unfair that this has been rushed.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming forward and making your presentation today.

HAMISH McEWAN

The Chair: Would Hamish McEwan come forward, please. Good afternoon, Mr McEwan.

Mr Hamish McEwan: My name is Hamish McEwan. I am a citizen of Toronto.

Back in the fall of 1996 I had been following the progress of David Crombie's Who Does What panel and for the most part I was pleased with their recommendations. Let me say that I was a little concerned about the intentions of this government when they talked about disentanglement and streamlining at the municipal level, but the creation of Mr Crombie's panel gave me a certain sense of security.

When he recommended partial amalgamation of the municipal governments of Metro, I thought, "Great." When he recommended pooling the education portion of the property tax to create a greater equality across the province, I thought, "Good choice." When he suggested the creation of a GTA council to replace the Metro government, I was pleased. Every recommendation seemed well thought out and well supported with study and fairly detailed statistical and financial information. The 905 area would be brought into the fold with the rest of Metro to create a strong economic entity easily recognized by the world, while the local governments would preserve the voices and concerns of the neighbourhoods so valued by their citizens. I began to relax, confident that all would end well.

Then, on December 18, I opened up my morning paper and began to read about Bill 103. I was instantly confused. Where did this idea come from? What information supported this? Who asked for this? I know that Mr Crombie recommended partial amalgamation within Metro, but that was within the framework of a larger amalgamation of the 905 municipalities and the creation of a GTA level of government to replace the Metro level. I also know he never recommended that it occur in such an undemocratic fashion. No study has recommended this model and certainly no study recommended this process.

The next thing I know, I'm going to meetings and handing out flyers and sitting in the visitors' gallery at the Legislature, trying to figure out how this bill was created and how I might help to slow it down or stop it,

and I'm not the only one: Scores of citizens from all over Metro are springing into action.

The battle begins and a few concessions are made: Bill 103 will not be forced through the Legislature with a minimum of debate and little or no public hearings. In fact we'll get to have our vote in a referendum before the bill is passed and we'll get over 100 hours of hearings.

I'm all excited. We are actually going to be given an opportunity to respond to the legislation. Democracy works: "Speak and you will be heard." Well, not quite. Apparently I'm only going to be heard if I can present some new information or new evidence.

On Monday, February 3, in the Globe and Mail Mr Leach is quoted as saying, "Unless there is some information that we are totally unaware of, and I don't believe that there is, then we will be moving forward with our agenda."

If it's new evidence you want, then I guess you don't mean the fact that it's completely anti-democratic for the province to appoint unaccountable, unelected trustees to usurp the power of local representatives. It also wouldn't be new information to tell you that cutting the number of local politicians would save the new city of Toronto less than 1% of its total budget, or that the destruction of our city councils and their subsequent amalgamation would amount to a potential saving of 50 cents a week for the average household, according to the only study that you even accept, the highly dubious KPMG report — saving that could be easily be achieved without amalgamation and its estimated transition costs of \$150 million to \$400 million.

1800

How about the fact that in the new Toronto there will be one councillor for every 53,000 people compared to one for every 5,300 in North Bay? Why should my local vote be 10 times less effective than someone else's in Ontario? But that's not new information either.

In trumpeting this bill, you have talked about ending duplication, making government more accountable and more efficient. Mr Gilchrist said yesterday, while questioning one of the speakers to this committee about waste and duplication, that the city of Toronto has two and a half times more employees per capita than the city of Scarborough. Mr Gilchrist, as a citizen of the city of Scarborough, I'm sure you are very proud of that statistic, but as a citizen of Scarborough, why should you even care what happens in the city of Toronto? You don't even pay taxes here. In fact, if the city of Scarborough is so well run, why would you even see an advantage in it throwing its lot in with the wasteful and bloated city of Toronto?

If the citizens of Toronto want and/or need the services and programs that require those employees and they are willing to pay for them with their property taxes, which I presume they are, judging by how they vote, then who are you, Mr Gilchrist and the rest of the members of this government who do not reside in this city, to dictate to us how our local government should serve us?

Let me create a hypothetical situation. Let's say for the sake of argument that the provinces, according to the Constitution, were wards of the federal government, and let's say that after years of study and observation the

federal government looked at Ontario and said, "My goodness, there's a poorly run province; look at all that waste, look at all that bureaucracy; something has got to be done," and they decided to pass a law that would fundamentally change how the people of Ontario were to be governed, and to make sure that in the transitional phase no member of the provincial government went on a spending or hiring spree, because they're all crooks, don't you know, the feds appointed three trustees with far-reaching, non-accountable powers. How would you feel?

How would you like to have federal MPs from all over the country telling Ontario how to take care of its business? You wouldn't like it. There would be a huge outcry, constitutional challenges, lots of "Who do you think you are?" Many of you would probably say that only the people of Ontario have the right to determine the function of their government. There has been very strong opposition at the provincial level across the country to the federal government's demanding compliance without granting control. There has been much talk about the legitimacy of the federal government.

Let's talk about legitimacy. John Ralston Saul said in *The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 1997, "Democracy is about the nature of legitimacy and whether the repository of that legitimacy — the citizens — are able to exercise the power its possession imposes on them." In this case the "citizens" would be those of the cities that make up Metropolitan Toronto and those they elected to serve them. Legitimacy does not lie with a bunch of MPPs from outside of Toronto who were never given the mandate to amalgamate.

The question must be asked, whom are you serving? Of the 82 members of the Progressive Conservative government, 66 represent ridings outside Metro. Three of the government seats on this committee are held by members outside of Metro. Perhaps you could tell me how you would explain to a constituent who needed your attention that you were too busy sitting on a committee dealing with the fate of 2.2 million people you don't represent.

Why are you even sitting on this committee? How could you possibly be familiar with the needs and desires of the citizens of this community? You don't even live here. I can't even imagine what the four of you would report back to your caucus: "Gee, they seem pretty upset. I don't know why, but let's go ahead anyway."

Let's talk about this bill and establish what you are being asked to vote for. Lots of people have mentioned the appointment of trustees and how that handcuffs our politicians, my politicians, retroactive to December 17, 1996. We also know that this bill has many details on how the trustees get to control things, but it is devoid of any detail concerning the form or function of the future government of the new city of Toronto. I know that according to section 5, we'll get neighbourhood councils established by the new city council, but I have no idea how they will be formed or who gets to participate. I know that we'll get a provincially appointed transition team, as laid out in section 16, and they will lay out the city's new structure and hire employees as they see fit. They get to run the new elections too.

Speaking of those elections, not only does this legislation nullify the previous municipal elections but it effectively makes the next round of elections meaningless. Why would politicians even want to run for the new council, knowing they had to answer to the transition team? How could a candidate even know what his or her powers are? There are certainly no hints in this bill. Imagine a political speech in the run-up to the next election, "I promise you I will do everything that the transition team allows me to, whatever that is, I mean, you know, if they'll let me." Not only did you take away my last vote, but you're taking away my next one. My vote will be useless if I don't know what I'm voting for.

You must ask yourself the same question: What are you voting for? There is such a lack of detail in this legislation that I don't see how any of you can vote for it when its implications are so vague. There are five pages about the new city and 15 about how to obey the trustees. How could you vote in favour of something so potentially destructive and yet so incredibly unclear? How does a government ask for the support of a bill, the effects of which fully 80% of its own members have no way of knowing, nor will they ever have to suffer its consequences? They don't live here, unless you know something I don't.

My wife and I have lived in Toronto for over 12 years. We were very unhappy about leaving Montreal and coming here but we needed work, so we came. I swore I would never like it and would move as soon as I could. Now we own a home and we will be adopting a child through Metro children's aid this year. We love this city. We have lived in the same neighbourhood for over 10 years where we have known, complained to and volunteered for our local representatives.

If we needed help to slow down drug dealers or prostitutes, they were there. If we needed help in controlling traffic flow or finding parking, they were there. If we wanted money for community events or an advocate for local business, they were there. I have never had any difficulty in getting hold of my local councillor or a member of his or her immediate staff. This is government that is efficient and accountable as well as being effective and responsive.

Toronto is the most livable city in North America because of its people and their elected representatives and the structures we have created together to manage it. It has been that way for over 150 years and should remain that way well into the future. Let the people decide.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr McEwan. You've come to the end of your time.

Applause.

The Chair: Order, please. Folks, there's not to be any audience participation. I've been very liberal, way too liberal, and if I have to start calling recesses, time won't be added on for other people's presentations.

MADELEINE McDOWELL

The Chair: Can Madeleine McDowell please come forward. Ms McDowell, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation, but I'll let you know beforehand that at the seven-minute mark you're going to be interrupted as we go for a vote. Go ahead.

Ms Madeleine McDowell: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm speaking on behalf of myself, but also I'm authorized to speak on behalf of the Federation of Ratepayers for the City of York.

I put in hundreds of hours each month in volunteer time working in heritage, education, social services and the environment. While I chair and serve on several boards and committees, the majority of my work is very hands-on, from chipping down to the original plaster in 150-year-old buildings or leading a naturalists' walk to delivering a lady to detox or running a weekly fund-raising bingo until my hair stinks of cigarette smoke, and I'm a non-smoker.

I fear for the future of each of the projects with which I and my many colleagues are involved. I also fear for my future ability to keep my home. The house doesn't matter that much but the rare rosebushes that my grandmother, who was a suffragist, planted over 70 years ago do.

Property taxes are feudal in their conception, and by 20th-century economics a regressive tax, totally devoid of relationship to the ability to pay. Property taxes should relate to the provision of services associated with the occupancy of that property, roads, sewers, lighting, security, recreation and green space, for examples.

We have in the past considered education as a direct service tied to occupancy and school districts related to population. Human services such as health, welfare, children's services, social housing, and transportation serving through traffic, such as some county roads and all highways, are a larger societal responsibility. They may fluctuate drastically with economic forces, serve the whole population, and should be provided for out of provincial revenues. They are usually most effectively administered by local municipal governments and NGOs within that framework. They are an unrealistic burden for the local property tax, most particularly the resident and the local employer.

Provincial divestment of a larger portion of responsibilities in these areas will cause tax increases of 20% to 25%, depending on how you look at it, on the Metro area assessment base. This will result in an increase in defaults in municipal taxes and a default tax increase spiral similar to that in the early 1930s, in which many municipalities went bankrupt. The Ontario Municipal Board was created to administer the trusteeships of these towns and townships, of which York was one, in 1932. The trustee was A.B.J. Gray.

I am concerned about the loss of our local boards and commissions, particularly York Hydro, which is the cheapest and most efficient in the GTA. It has an economy of size in services and administration.

I am concerned about the fate of local architectural conservation advisory committees. Planning has been divested by the province to the municipalities, which in turn may govern development "with regard to" rather than "consistent with" Ontario regulations. The province has also withdrawn almost all funding from architectural heritage and a great deal of the environmental and archaeological. With a larger single municipality with a population almost the size of Alberta, it will be difficult to impossible to maintain local communities and heritage,

which the province has already weakened by withdrawal of both financial and regulatory support.

During four elections and 14 years in public office, because I was a public school trustee, I represented just under 12,000 constituents, or about two thirds of my ward's population. Most of the children knew me, as did many of the separate school supporters. When I walked down the street or was shopping or banking, people talked with me. Sometimes it was the weather or to ask what was happening, but usually it was whatever was bothering them. They knew me and I knew them. I understood the needy, under-the-surface currents and made sure the administration did too. I had both the children of privilege and Metro housing in the same classrooms. It's easy to see the gloss and miss the cracks in the glaze. I relate my personal experience because our members of council have the same.

In a ward where one represents about 20,000, this sort of intimacy is possible. The little old lady down the street or the barely-English-speaking newcomer from a totalitarian regime is not intimidated; neither does anyone perceive themselves as a voiceless statistic. Their democracy is real to them. If they don't like their representatives or their actions, they can and will act on it.

In the 1930s, when things were really bad, a small group of very responsible local citizens kidnapped the reeve, Marsh Magwood, and held him prisoner in a local community hall until he had heard their problems and agreed to take some action. The municipal government had become a little too distant. Nowadays these men — a teacher, a carpenter, two market gardeners, a plumber, a storekeeper — would all go to jail. They were very frustrated by the distancing of government and a dead child. The ratepayers' organization that they were members of still holds its charter.

The 1-to-20,000 ratio for representation in a Metro area of 2.5 million would give us approximately 120 representatives, with six functioning councils of 12, plus or minus two, and a mayor to preside. A small council of mayors and deputies from area municipalities would also be needed to deal with cross-jurisdictional concerns. It could enlarge to encompass the GTA.

The 44-seat congress of the new Toronto imposes a form of government that is not friendly to municipal jurisdiction. It means parties, it means money and it means concentration of power. It freezes out the little guy. It implies a large level playing field of grass, well-mown —

The Chair: Ms McDowell, I'm terribly sorry to have to do this, but I have to allow the members three minutes at least to get up to the Legislature to vote, so we'll come back immediately after the vote and hear the remainder of your presentation.

The committee recessed from 1815 to 1823.

The Chair: Ms McDowell, if you'd like to continue, I apologize for the interruption.

Ms McDowell: It's all right. I was speaking of well-mown grass, when we should be moving to naturalization and propagation of indigenous species and other compatible plants and trees.

The British, European and aboriginal people who founded Ontario, from John Graves Simcoe to Joseph

Brant, had a dream of a slave-free state with free speech and opportunity for all. It ran into some problems in the 1830s and a number of people died for the cause of responsible government in 1837-38. The aftermath gave us an experiment in government unique in the world at the time and the Baldwin Act of 1842 gave us the basis of our current municipal governments.

It also gave us the philosophy of our Constitution of 1867: peace, order and good government. The first two are the essence of civilized life and they are entirely dependent on the third. Good government is responsive, responsible and non-intimidating. People see the federal government as dealing with affairs of state and income tax; the provinces, highways and sales tax. The municipality is their day-to-day lives, garbage collection and street safety. They must have a real role in it, and that is only real when it involves elected representation.

I do not believe in empowering people, they have to do that themselves, but the mechanisms have to be in place for them to do that. One of the most important of these is the office of our elected representatives, and by "office" I do not mean four walls and a desk. The office must be accessible to those seeking it responsibly and it must be perceived as neither remote nor biased by those whom it serves.

Government should not intimidate. It does. Government must be our government; that is, within the realm of possibility, participatory democracy at the intimacy of the municipal level.

My city of York has had an ongoing assessment liability problem which was answered by the Robarts commission recommendations and which can be dealt with by their implementation. It means a little nibble at the city of Toronto and a small bite from North York of property that was York within living memory, although not mine.

What will it cost to recodify or rationalize existing municipal bylaws? How will this be done? The transition team, which is appointed sine die by the Lieutenant Governor, has sweeping powers which override elected representation and deal with the very structure of government and its administration, without appeal to the courts. We pay them, their agents, employees and expenses. We don't even set the rates and it's to be found within the budget; the same for the trustees, as of December 1996.

The people and governments of the Metropolitan Toronto area are not criminal, bankrupt or incompetent, but there are trustees. Those who do not trust should perhaps look within themselves.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms McDowell, for your presentation. We've also used up the 10 minutes. I want to apologize again for the interruption. Thank you for coming before the committee.

We'll recess now until 7 o'clock, when our first deputant will be Mr Lang.

The committee recessed from 1826 to 1903.

GREGORY LANG

The Chair: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Our first presenter this evening is Gregory Lang. Mr Lang, I want to thank you for waiting. I know you were sched-

uled to be the last presenter at 5:50 but we ran behind quite a bit in time. You have 10 minutes to make your presentation this evening. At the end of that, if there's some time remaining, I will ask the NDP caucus, Mr Marchese, to ask some questions.

Mr Gregory Lang: I'll actually be brief. I would prefer to field questions. Basically my view is that the megacity Bill 103 is driven not by an analysis of what's good for or bad for Metro Toronto but rather by the greater issue of how a government can deliver on a promise to reduce taxes by 30%. It's part and parcel of the restructuring of taxes and downloading of social welfare costs to the municipalities, which current municipalities can't bear the burden of, therefore they require a larger municipality which probably still can't bear the burden but at least has a better shot at it.

In the process of developing this policy, this legislation, it seems to me it's a six-beer solution, something that was conceived at the end of a business day in a bar. Unfortunately, it's a six-beer solution to the wrong problem. It answers the question of how do we deliver an election promise rather than answering the question how do we improve municipal governments, the effectiveness of the Toronto area.

It amuses me that in 1953, when Metro was conceived, half of the geographic space that it was to cover was agricultural land; today half the greater Toronto area is also agricultural land. By eliminating the municipal councils and going to a Metro council, it seems to me that in 2003, 50 years later, we'll come up with the same solution that we came up with in 1953 and introduce a GTA-level government and another tier of government, which is exactly what we have now except at the wrong level, because of growth. So going back to old solutions doesn't make sense.

One issue that really stands out in my mind is the lack of provision in the bill for the reserve funds of municipal governments, approximating, in my understanding, \$1 billion. Usually in an amalgamation of this kind, legislation of this kind, some provisions are made for the dedication of those funds, where they're going to go etc. No mention is made. It seems to me that helps along the way to delivering a 30% tax cut to Ontario, but anyway, that's not known for sure.

One other thing: In the level of government that's most effective and most efficient, there are two things that happen. One is a process and one is a product. When the product is identical across all municipalities, then indeed the processes that are redundant are inefficient. When the product is not identical, when it is dissimilar enough, then the processes also need to be dissimilar because that is more efficient.

I'd liken it to manufacturing shoes, if you would. You could make one size of shoe and then refit those shoes for the different sizes of feet or you could make various sizes of shoes for the various sizes of feet. One has less redundancy in process but more efficiency in product. Having a smaller layer of government closer to the people is more efficient in actually delivering the services desired by the people.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Mr Lang. I appreciate the presentation. I have quite a few questions. I was reading

a Toronto Sun article today where M. Leach was reported to have said that his opponents have failed so far to convince him to change his plans. M. Leach says he's willing to consider altering parts of Bill 103 but not its substance. I'm not quite sure what he's thinking about by way of alteration. But he proceeds to say: "All I've heard is this is a bad thing to do," Leach said. "But nobody has given me any evidence it's bad."

Could you comment on that statement that M. Leach made?

Mr Lang: Specifically, to use an example, if we fill classrooms with students and provide a teacher and we do the same thing across the province with hundreds and hundreds of teachers teaching the same curriculum, the same content, surely that's redundant, and it's a similar redundancy that's provided in various municipal governments, where the same services are being provided to various people in different locations etc. We could avoid the redundancy in education by having one teacher broadcast it by video to all of the students. Obviously there's a social cost there of something lost, something slips through the cracks.

We know already that a 40-student classroom is less effective than a 30-student classroom as far as reaching the students and effecting what our initial goal was in the first place. It's very similar with municipal governments in that to create an effective democracy, a participative democracy, it has to be close to the people. To get the neighbours to volunteer to help support, to get the burden off the government and back to the individuals, to the neighbourhoods where it belongs, you have to have a level of government that is in your neighbourhood, not located somewhere far off and away.

Mr Marchese: Sure. On the issue of evidence, we have looked at the fact that a number of professors have done several studies to show that amalgamating cities or towns is not necessarily cost-effective. That was one of the few things that Mr Leach and Mr Harris talked about in very beginning: "If we amalgamate, we'll save money." That was the most important thing that they talked about. Professor Kitchen, Professor Sancton and others have done studies in Canada, and I suspect outside of Canada, to show there is no evidence that you save money.

Do you think the burden should be on individuals like you to prove that somehow that is not the case or do you think the burden should be on the minister to prove through research that he might have gathered, wherever he might have found it, that that is the case?

Mr Lang: I definitely believe it's the minister's responsibility to prove that there will be significant cost savings, and "significant" meaning outweighing the social costs, the other side of the coin, the things that get damaged in the process. The amusing thing is that it is the general public that is doing the research and finding the reasons why this won't work, why it will end up costing us money. Every study done shows that when you level the playing field across amalgamation in municipalities, it always goes to the highest level of pay, the highest size of organization, and therefore the highest cost. Everything actually goes up, so those cost-savings and rationalizations don't actually occur.

1910

I have to go back to its being a larger issue, one of downloading. Even in that issue they talk about saving money for the taxpayers etc, but I have a document in front of me which you'll receive at the end of the day which identifies the costs and actually suggests an average 10% increase per taxpayer in Metro, which is unheard of, and that's from downloading social welfare, which we can't afford to do.

Mr Marchese: Yes, that's the other part of all of this. Some people are speaking strictly to Bill 103 without talking about the downloading of other essential services to the municipal taxpayer and the implication of both and how they're inevitably interlocked. But I have another question that I wanted your feedback on.

Part of what has irritated me a great deal as someone living in Toronto, right downtown here, in the riding I represent, is that the people outside of the area of Metropolitan Toronto have gotten democracy and a facilitator to help them amalgamate, if that's what they want to do. In Metropolitan Toronto this government has decided against democracy and has ruled in favour of autocracy and has decided that that kind of omnipotence was what was needed here in Metropolitan Toronto. How do you feel about getting different treatment here in Metro than the rest of the folks outside?

Mr Lang: First of all, I feel grateful that we get different treatment in Metro because we tend to benefit more often than not. I do not like the absence of democracy. The only democracy evidenced in this whole process so far is this committee, and I liken it to walking a dog where the dog's name is Democracy and it's just for exercise.

I don't believe that this committee is really mandated to make legitimate recommendations and, I'm sorry, but I believe this is a fait accompli. As Mr Leach has said, unless new evidence proves that this is the wrong thing to do, then he won't change his path. New evidence requires refuting old evidence. Unfortunately, there's no old evidence. That's the initial problem. If he had presented evidence to us, we could refute it for him, but he hasn't. He's failed to do that off the mark.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Lang, for your patience in waiting to make your presentation this evening.

DOUG HUM

The Chair: Would Doug Hum please come forward? Good evening, Mr Hum.

Mr Doug Hum: I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to speak on this matter, as there are many speakers, and I feel it's a privilege to address the committee on this issue. But before I start, as a Chinese Canadian and on the eve of our lunar new year, I'd like to wish everyone a happy lunar new year. [*Remarks in Cantonese.*] That's in Cantonese what I said in English.

I am a long-time resident of downtown Toronto and I've lived in the city for most of my life, except for two years in New York City and that was in lower Manhattan in New York's Chinatown. The atmosphere on the streets of New York that I knew then as a 10-year-old, and this was around 1950, was very similar to the atmosphere

currently on our streets in downtown Toronto today. One could walk around at almost any time during the day and feel reasonably safe. I returned to New York City for a visit in the mid-1960s and was confronted by changes that saw that city's newspaper headlines screaming the latest fire bombs and race riots. I have not revisited New York City since.

This is where I fear that Bill 103 may take us — the Americanization of our municipality and all that that implies; its impact on our communities, our way of life, our people, our families, our children, and ultimately, our children's children. This bill, as I understand it, is only the precursor of other legislation that will follow.

Bill 103 will lay the foundation that polarizes and divides our communities and sets us one against another. It lays the foundations for class warfare, suspicion, distrust and even hatred. It sets homeowners against social housing tenants. It sets property taxpayers against welfare recipients. There will be homeowners who resent their property taxes being collected to support social housing. There will be property taxpayers who will resent their taxes being collected to support welfare recipients. Homeowners will then call for their taxes to be spent on law enforcement to keep welfare recipients and the poor in their place and to build places of incarceration.

What is being proposed is totally foreign to our way of life as Canadians and will fundamentally change our communities, our quality of life, and the way we regard one another. The bill fuels the atmosphere of laissez-faire and the rule of survival of the strongest, the meanest, and the most ruthless. It lays the foundation for a community where, when one is weak and unable to compete, they will be disregarded and swept aside.

This malaise in our community will lead to more victims of spousal abuse and more neglect of children. There are already people dying on our streets. The homeless number in the thousands. The bill will create more desperation, and desperate people will do desperate things.

Bill 103 is destructive to democracy and democratic participation and will diminish citizen involvement and people participation. It is undemocratic, I believe, to appoint unelected trustees to exercise autocratic control over my elected representatives at both city and Metro councils. This is placing excessive and potentially abusive and dictatorial powers in the hands of a few unelected, appointed individuals. This is contrary to the basic principles of my country, of universal suffrage, and of basic human rights and common decency.

I understand that the city of North Bay, with a population of 55,000, will be provided with a 10-member city council, which works out to one elected representative for every 5,500 persons. On the other hand, the new Toronto city council will have one councillor for every 50,000 persons. You're removing accessibility to those who are supposed to be elected to deal with our concerns and our views.

Bill 103 will be a barrier to those who may not be well off or wealthy to run for office. Running for mayor and the new council will require great financial means or financial backing. Thus it becomes democracy for the wealthy and suppression for the poor.

The proposed municipal governance structure of Bill 103 diminishes local input into local decision-making. Councillors in the amalgamated city will be unable to grasp sufficient understanding of local issues from other parts of the region that they do not represent to make informed decisions. Decisions will be made by councillors with less understanding and awareness of local conditions and needs in other parts of the region.

Although proposed appointed local area committees are to be established to address local needs, I fear they will become enclaves to represent the wishes of only the well-off and the wealthy. Many poor people are stressed to the limit and will be in no position to participate. Bill 103 builds a governance structure that is unfair and diminishes democracy.

Throughout the 1995 provincial election, I never understood that amalgamation and the dissolution of our six cities in Metro was an issue. I never understood that the citizens of Metro Toronto gave the new government of Ontario a mandate to diminish democracy and to subjugate our local councils to appointed officials.

As I understand it when I read through the newspaper, this bill is going to proceed and we're going to have a unified city regardless of the exercise we're going through, regardless of what people have to say. So you are leaving people with no alternative but to take to the streets as they did on October 25 and 26. The spirit of democracy does not end with legislation. That struggle, as in 1837, will continue through to 1997, and the struggle for democracy, as it did on Yonge Street long ago and right through to Tiananmen Square, will go on regardless of whatever decision this government makes. Thank you.

Mrs Munro: Thank you very much, Mr Hum, for appearing here this evening. There are a couple of issues you've raised that I would just like to ask you to further clarify for us.

We always talk about there being only one taxpayer, and on page 2 you've made the suggestion that you see the question of social services being something that people might resent if it's on their property tax. I just wondered why you see that as a difference, if there is only one taxpayer; the change in people's attitudes. If they are paying for it one way or the other, why would their attitude change?

1920

Mr Hum: Our property tax system of support is regressive. It is uneven and doesn't fall fairly on all, and it isn't paid in a way that each individual is able to pay. There may be homeowners who are property-rich and liquid-asset-poor. You're putting them in excessive difficulties.

The population in Metro is aging and on fixed incomes. By transferring and downloading the programs that have been suggested, the needs in Metro and the risk factors in Metro are growing, and they can only grow because of the demographics. This puts excessive stress on property taxpayers basically to support social programs. It's not fair. The income tax structure is far more fair because it's based on ability to pay and not on what you own.

Mrs Munro: If I have another moment, just a second quick question. On page 3 you talk about the councillors in the amalgamated city. I just wondered, if we look at the idea of the community council where you have six or seven elected members to respond to local needs, if you could comment on that in terms of the way in which those committees would be able to respond to community needs.

Mr Hum: I'm not clear on how exactly they are to be structured, but I guess citizens are appointed to it. Is that right?

Mrs Munro: No. These are the people you've elected.

Mr Hum: If you deal with it that way — unfortunately, I haven't really assessed that in those terms, but the concern here is that final decisions are brought before a council of the whole, and as I pointed out, a councillor in one region will not have all the total information and understand everything in another region.

Mrs Munro: I appreciate that, and that's why I asked you this question.

The Chair: Mrs Munro, I'm sorry. You've come to the end of your time. Thank you, Mr Hum, for coming forward this evening to make your presentation.

AINÉ SUTTLE

The Chair: Would Aine Suttle please come forward. Good evening and welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes this evening to make your presentation.

Ms Aine Suttle: Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you today. To let you know, I am absolutely opposed to this bill to amalgamate the seven local governments in Metro into one megacity. I'm an immigrant to Canada. I moved from the Republic of Ireland in 1969 with a friend. We came via New York City, which absolutely terrified me. I felt completely unsafe and I couldn't get out of there quickly enough. Subsequent visits haven't changed my mind.

I flew to Toronto within a day and I was amazed at the contrast. The customs staff were so friendly and welcoming. I took a bus downtown and ended up in Nathan Phillips Square. It was wonderful. I couldn't figure out why there was music and lots of people there on a Tuesday. I didn't then understand the significance of the fact that I'd arrived on July 1. My friend was exhausted, so I went looking for accommodation. We ended up being adopted by a student who put us up on our first night in Canada.

My original plan had been to move to Montreal because the word in Ireland was that Toronto was a pretty dull place. Nothing could have been further from the truth, from my perspective. I felt I'd hit heaven. I had a job within a week and I settled down. I never intended to stay here. I just wanted to see a bit of the world, but years went by and I never moved anywhere. I had no reason. Life was quite wonderful here.

I was a pretty passive citizen for most of my years here. I didn't feel I had any need to become involved politically. It wasn't until my son was 18 months old that I felt the need to become more active. In 1986 he was diagnosed as having a high lead level. There were no signs or symptoms of it, and I only found out because the

Toronto public health department was testing children in my neighbourhood of south Riverdale for lead. It was an incredible shock, as I felt I had been a very attentive mother. As I learned more about the lead pollution in my neighbourhood, I became very angry and realized that I couldn't sit back passively any more. It was a major learning experience. Through it I learned a lot about the political process and how capable and caring each level of government is or is not.

The city of Toronto was terrific. Their concern for the health of our children was real and it resulted in action. I found when I made my very first deputation ever before a city committee that the members actually listened. They asked questions that made it clear they had taken in what I was saying. That experience was not unusual, I was to discover.

My experience with Metro was not quite so pleasant. I ended up interacting with Metro on the issue of the Commissioners Street incinerator. It was very clear that this facility posed a threat to the health of people in Riverdale and beyond, but it took years before we were able to persuade them to close it down. Almost as soon as they did, they proposed increasing incineration at the Ashbridges Bay main sewage treatment plant. We've been saying no to incineration to Metro now for at least 11 years, and they still don't seem to get the message.

My son's lead problem brought me into contact with the provincial level of government also. When I got involved, Riverdale had been lobbying the provincial government for 16 years to remove the contaminated soil from people's gardens, which was a threat particularly to our children's health. It was with no success. Then the Liberal government got into power and suddenly we had a Minister of the Environment, Jim Bradley, who listened. Within two years we had real action; the soil was removed. It was dramatic how quickly things changed.

I've thought about the differences in the way politicians and bureaucrats interact with the public at the different levels of government. It's interesting that the staff at the city level of government are far more open than those at the higher levels. They tend to give straight answers to questions. They seem to have a more confident and positive relationship with the politicians, which results in clearer communication all around. Real negotiation takes place, whereas the higher up you go, the less likely, I have found, that you can get any information from staff or politicians.

I believe this has to do with the party politics at the higher levels. When the government changes, there almost seems to be a need to change things dramatically, almost for the sake of change rather than because it's needed. Bureaucrats have to be very careful what they say if they're to survive and be promoted. This doesn't make for open communications. At the lower levels, there is more stability. A change in politicians doesn't have as dramatic an effect. There always seems to be a better balance between the political left and right.

I was speaking with my mother recently, who still lives in Ireland. There they have proportional representation, which has resulted in coalition governments over the past decade or so. It's very difficult there for any one party to get a majority. She feels it's a much more stable system.

As she put it, because the different parties have to govern together, they keep each other honest. All parties have equal access to information, and that filters down to the general public also.

Since the present government was elected, I feel that the province has been turned upside down. We're not being governed; we're being abused. It's terrifying. The only positive thing that I can see coming out of all this chaos is that it's pushing people like myself to question the basis on which our government is built. I certainly had no idea that any provincial government could do what this government has done. I didn't realize the power that was vested in this level. We have no checks and balances; you've taken them away. I'm no historian, but I'm unaware of any other previous provincial government ever taking advantage of its power in the way this one has.

1930

You can dissolve our local government, but you shouldn't. You can create a mega, monster Metro government, but you shouldn't. You will be destroying democracy in Metro and wherever else you amalgamate.

The lower levels of government are the humane ones. Politicians at the city level actually deal on a one-to-one basis with citizens. We get to know each other as people. I've only recently started to visit the provincial Legislature. I can't believe how dangerous it is just to get here. I don't drive, so I always come on foot. I can't believe that after almost 200 years one has to dodge traffic crossing the street anywhere south of Grosvenor. There are no lights or crosswalk. It's clear that physical access for the general public hasn't ever been a priority.

In contrast, I love to visit Toronto city hall. When my son was younger, I often had to bring him with me when I was making deputations or attending meetings. One time he left his father's scissors, which had been borrowed without permission, behind in a meeting room. The next day I went to the lost and found to see if they had turned up. I told the staff person what had happened. He looked but couldn't find them. Then he asked me to wait. He went off and brought back a pair of city-issue scissors, which looked just the same. He didn't ask for any money; he was just a human being reacting to another human being. I guess you could call that inefficient, but I call it warmth.

I usually drop in to say hello to the staff in my local councillor's office just because I enjoy their company, and we've gotten to know each other. At Metro I can't do that. There's a guard at the door and somebody has to come out to verify that I'm a legitimate constituent or something. It seems that the higher levels of government are afraid of people, and to tell you the truth, these days the provincial government has good reason to be afraid. Somebody is going to blow one of these days.

You have the power to do anything you like, but if you really want to change things you have to engage people in a process that truly respects their opinions. Ram change through and it will not last. We will do everything we can to undermine it. We have given you the privilege of governing us for five years. Respect it.

We're holding a referendum on the issue of amalgamation. We're doing so under the rules that you developed.

We're asking that you respect the results of that referendum and act in accordance with our wishes.

The Chair: Thank you, Aine, for coming forward and making your presentation this evening. You have effectively used the 10-minute period. I appreciate you making your presentation.

ANGELA REBEIRO

The Chair: Would Angela Rebeiro please come forward. Good evening. Welcome to the committee. You have 10 minutes this evening to make your presentation. If there's some time left at the end, I'll ask the Liberal caucus to ask some questions.

Ms Angela Rebeiro: Fair enough. My appearance before this committee tonight is to address part III, "The Transitional Year," of Bill 103, now commonly known as the amalgamation bill, and in particular the sections dealing with the board of trustees and the transition team.

Notwithstanding the pronouncements of our elected officials not to pay heed to the results of a referendum which may be against this bill or to any criticism of this bill, I nevertheless continue to believe that Canada and Ontario are still a democracy. As an interested citizen and partner in this country and province, my input and that of hundreds of other citizens of this province is important to ensure that some semblance of our democratic principles remains intact. I am forced to use the phrase "some semblance" to refer to what's left of democracy in Ontario after reading certain sections of this bill, already referred to above.

What strikes me most about this bill is its cynicism and how one elected body of people, the provincial government of Ontario, has turned inward on another elected body of people and its citizens. At the end of the reading it is rather difficult not to draw the conclusion that the action and activity announced in this bill is more about political cleansing than cutting costs and doing away with waste and duplication.

The powers awarded to the board of trustee and to the transition team are truly awesome, especially when under clauses 12(1) and 18(1), "The decisions of the board of trustees" and "the transition team...are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court," yet under clause 25(1), "The minister may apply to the Ontario Court (General Division) for an order requiring any person or anybody to comply with any provision of,

"(a) this act;

"(b) a regulation made under this act;

"(c) a decision of the board of trustees or of the transition team under this act."

In both cases, the board of trustees and the transition team are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which means that the Lieutenant Governor is charged with accepting the recommendations of the government. Nowhere in this document could I find any reference to including non-political citizens to the board of trustees or the transition team.

Two years ago the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto elected individuals of their choosing to represent them in local government decisions, and under our current democratic principles we can vote them out of office if

we believe they have behaved inappropriately in carrying out the spirit of our agreement made at the polls on voting day and following weeks of debate on issues pertinent to our communities.

On December 17, 1996, we woke up to find that we were now to be governed by a board of trustees and that our elected officials and ourselves would have our daily lives managed by a transition team which reports to the board of trustees, making us three steps removed from our daily business. There is something almost coup-like about a group of people without accountability to the citizens of these now ousted municipalities being appointed to govern, and that our elected officials and their employees are now in the employ of an unknown body of non-elected officials who are not in any way charged to meet the citizens of the municipalities or to allow them to witness their decisions about expenditures or other matters affecting their lives for the next year and perhaps well beyond January 1998.

In addition, under clause 2(5b) the assets of each municipality are seized and become the property of the new municipality, without any input from the citizens of the municipality who have acquired these assets in the many ways that a city, a province, a region is built. Had time permitted, it would have been worth checking to find out the assets in each municipality that may have been raised through hours and hours of volunteer work or fund-raising drives which have included partnerships with one's municipality and local business to acquire these enhancements for our respective cities. All these refinements of our society, and even the unwanted warts, now become the property of another municipality at the stroke of an individual's pen.

Furthermore, under part III, "The Transitional Year," clause 9, section 10 and clause 16, section 12, "the minister *may*" — and the emphasis is mine — "by order, dissolve the board of trustees" and "the transition team" after January 31, 1998. So even if we are privileged to elect a new municipality of 2.3 million citizens — the population of four Atlantic provinces — we may well end up with a non-elected group of people, whose numbers are yet to be identified, continuing to oversee our decisions, or worse still, we may still not be able to make any decisions at all, all the while picking up the tab for the salaries of 42 newly elected members and two sets of overseers and their employees as outlined in the bill.

These sections of the bill are an offence not only to the elected representatives of each municipality, but they also harshly assume that the citizens of these municipalities are not responsible and will not ensure that their elected officials will not run off with the bank now being seized by virtue of this act.

What is particularly cynical yet curious about clause 11, item 3, is that while the power of our democratically elected municipal officials is limited in how money is spent or bylaws are made or broken in the next year, this section states, "Capital expenditures shall not be less than in 1996, unless the reduction was provided for in an earlier budget." Yet in the same section, item 2, "In the case of a local board, total operating expenditures shall not be greater than they were in 1996."

What is one to make of this? On the one hand the provincial government seems to fear that the democratically elected city officials and their citizens will run off and have a spending spree, I guess on social improvements, but on the other hand they are not allowed to reduce expenditures on buildings and furnishings without the approval of the non-elected body. How does one interpret this discrepancy?

More than all of that, what is truly frightening and awesome, given that we consider ourselves to be still living in a democracy, is that our legal rights to challenge have been taken away under clauses 12(1) and 18(1), as noted above. This also suggests an infallibility and righteousness in our provincial politicians, enough to send one scurrying to a bank to withdraw one's money or at least to stop spending it on anything but necessities, because if this bill passes into law as is, then we're in a downward spiral away from democracy. This and similar clauses in the bill treat the citizens of the municipalities with unwarranted contempt and leave one wondering why. Why is this necessary if the government is so convinced of its rightness in what it's doing?

In the meantime, under clause 17, the transition team is empowered to hire staff. In section 5 of this clause: "The council of the new city shall be deemed to have taken, on January 1, 1998, all steps that may be required to make the person the effective holder of his or her office." As I read clauses 16 and 17 of this bill, I interpret the points here to mean — and I'd like to be corrected — that the newly elected council doesn't even have the privilege of hiring its own staff for the new municipality but may well be saddled with politically paid appointees hired under the umbrella of the board of trustees and the transition team.

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The larger difficulty with this unfortunate bill is that it has overshadowed the real discussion which should be taking place, and that is whether or not amalgamation of these municipalities is good for the greater Toronto area and/or how best to implement it in the interests of all of its citizens.

It is unfortunate that the government did not choose to offer a referendum on the announcement of the bill and to follow that up with real discussion and community meetings, to explain to citizens what one would like to believe are the government's best intentions and not what most people now perceive, that this is a government avenging itself on people not disposed to workfare programs and other disagreements with this current provincial government.

This bill empowers a board of trustees and a transition team, both of which exclude any input from the very taxpayers the government claims to be working to support with bigger tax breaks. It is interesting to note too how opposition to this bill jumped following a week of announcements that the government will offload or download, as you wish, a number of services on to the broader tax base of 2.3 million without any consultation.

We like to blame business for a lot of our ills these days, but it struck me when the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto came out against this offloading of social responsibilities on to the new municipality that the

government itself may not be sure, or doesn't really care, whether this move is in the interests of the citizens of Toronto, because what's more at stake here is a 30% personal income tax break, even if we end up spending twice as much on user fees, which we undoubtedly will, amalgamation or not.

Further, it seems to me that we have put in place a rather dangerous set of precedents in this bill. Why, for example, would the national government not wake up one morning and decide that it is in the best interests of Canada to do away with an Ontario-Quebec border and merge them into one province in order to overcome the Quebec separation problem, which would then give the combined provinces more English-language citizens? In fact, why not abolish the duplication and waste of 10 provinces and have only the national government, and by order in council we could bring in President Bill Clinton to serve as a transition team?

Nothing is sci-fi any more, is it? As the municipalities exist at the pleasure of the province — this is a question from me to those who know best — do the provinces also exist at the pleasure of the national government? Let's hope not.

Finally, my recommendations are these: that the bill be amended to exclude clauses 12(1) and 18(1); that the government work towards a transparent process which allows the public to be the overseers of the changes in their lives; that this be done by including on the transition team ordinary citizens and currently elected municipal politicians who are paid no more than an honorarium for their time and input; that the public have periodic and regular access to the transition team through regular public consultations; that the public be assured that on January 1, 1998, both the board of trustees and the transition team will be disbanded and that the new municipality will immediately be empowered to act on behalf of the citizens which elected them; and further, that all staff hired by the trustees or transition team become staff of the new municipality at its pleasure.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Rebeiro. You've gone a little bit beyond the allotted time. Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation today.

KAY GARDNER

The Chair: Kay Gardner, please. Good evening and welcome to the committee.

Ms Kay Gardner: Mr Chairman and members of the committee, before I begin my presentation, I just want to tell you that I do have a stammer, so if I get stuck, please bear with me.

I have examined the megacity proposal every which way — under a microscope, using police dogs that sniff out drugs, with a divining rod, and I've even consulted with the spirit world — but the answer is always the same: Megacity spells disaster for the city of Toronto.

Megacity means mega-taxes and mega-cuts in services for the city of Toronto. Megacity would immediately mean substantial increases in property taxes. The city's staff have conducted a meticulous study of the impact megacity would have on property taxes. They have

concluded that in the first year taxes across the Metro area will increase by an average of 13%, and this does not include the increases that will be caused by the market value assessment system the province intends to enact. The 13% average tax increase in 1998 will be significantly increased in many cases because of the market value factor.

Here are the estimated average tax increases predicted by the city tax authorities for 1998. Actually, today we have some indication that they will be larger than this: per household \$350; per business \$7,923; and per industry \$4,152.

These are the same estimates used by George Fierheller, president of the board of trade, when he sounded the alarm about the economic ruination of Metro Toronto if it becomes a megacity. Mr Fierheller said that Metro's property tax base will continue to erode as businesses and even homeowners take flight to the suburbs. "What all this means is the tax-driven exodus of business and industry to the 905 area and elsewhere will accelerate," Mr Fierheller said.

He is right. If we drive out businesses, Toronto will go to wrack and ruin. When in Toronto recently at our invitation, Wendell Cox, an American authority on cities, had this to say:

"The three US megacities with over two million population have faced particularly intractable problems. Two (New York and Los Angeles) are contending with advancing secession movements — sparked by the belief that remote city halls were ignoring local neighbourhood needs. The third megacity (Chicago) has lost almost one million residents, who seceded.

"So far as the 'efficiency' principle is concerned, the US experience points to substantially higher costs for cities in the population range over one million. These are typically in the 20% to 40% range and can exceed 100% in the case of amalgamated municipalities. For residents and businesses of these larger cities, cost premiums mean higher property taxes and/or lower service levels," Cox said.

Cox concluded, "There appears to be no valid reason why GTA cities should not remain well within the efficient urban population range (above 100,000 and below 1,000,000) a range providing for high-quality services with lower tax burdens."

Mr Chairman and members of the committee, as you know, David Crombie, the government's own megacity consultant, has denounced the downloading of welfare costs on to the municipalities as "absolutely the wrong thing to do." He also urged the province to heed the advice of the board of trade and the United Appeal, which jointly condemned the plan.

The province has made much of the fact that it would pay all school costs for the megacity, but what they have not told us is that taxpayers would be worse off than they are now.

We'd be worse off because the province would compel the megacity to pay for half instead of one fifth of the cost of welfare, pay the cost of social housing, the cost of child welfare, the police, the TTC subways, buses and ferries, day care, long-term care, health, libraries, sewers and water, highways, a share of the GO train costs and

more. The cost of this downloading amounts to \$500 million more than we would save in school costs, which means inevitably higher taxes and cuts in service.

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No wonder Metro Chairman Alan Tonks said: "The magnitude of the impact is so huge, this is a high-stakes, high-risk process. This impact is just not sustainable."

The truth is that if Toronto becomes a megacity, it may well meet the same fate as the United States three crime-ridden, broken-down megacities: Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Downtown Toronto could become a hollow shell.

The government has made two points regarding the financial outcome of amalgamation. They said at first that we could save hundreds of millions of dollars by having one municipality instead of six separate municipalities. But they have not, so far, done one serious impact study. It did commission one quick, superficial study which has been thoroughly discredited. The government is selling us a pig in a poke for \$500 million.

The government is saying it will be revenue-neutral, but they have offered no estimated costs to prove that. How can this megacity proposal be revenue-neutral when it increases the municipalities' costs by at least \$500 million?

Homeowners, tenants and owners of businesses should be reminded that the government also intends to implement a market value tax assessment system, this in spite of the fact that the city of Toronto has resoundingly rejected the market value system, not once but twice.

This downloading must be paid for by property taxes and/or cuts in services to the residents of the city of Toronto, and I believe both.

Take one small item: for instance, libraries. In 1977 provincial grant to libraries was \$5.2 million, with the city of Toronto receiving \$1.3 million. Under the megacity, municipalities will have to pay the total library costs. This could lead to user fees and cuts in many services now offered by our fine libraries.

Finally, a megacity council would be remote from the people and therefore local democracy would wither.

For four years Toronto city council has held the line on property taxes — no increases in four years because of our stringent budget cuts. My constituents will revolt against mega-tax increases.

I have represented the residents of ward 15, which takes in north Toronto and upper Forest Hill, for 12 years. It is their interests that I am here to protect tonight.

I would just like to add a couple of words that I have not included in my written submission. I came here tonight in sorrow and in pity because there are so many things that our city needs, although *Fortune* magazine has named us the most enviable place in the world to live.

At city council on Monday and Tuesday we spent about three hours debating the plight of our young people, that so many of our young people are hanging out on the streets, are squeegee kids and have no jobs. We were trying to solve that job problem for our young people. We at the city of Toronto do not have the means to do this. We need your help. We need the help of Ottawa.

We are going to lose a generation of young people because not only do we have a great many young people who are unskilled, who have no jobs, but we have a great many young people who have one and two degrees and no jobs. We have so many homeless young people. We have more and more people going to food banks. As fewer and fewer people are donating these days, it is harder to get free food. We need your help.

We should be here discussing with you how to solve these problems in a city that works; we should not be here trying to save a city that works. We have these problems of homelessness, of hunger, of people freezing in our streets, yet we are the envy of the world. Why are we here trying to destroy the city that works instead of trying to solve these problems? We need your help to solve those problems.

We should not be spending five weeks in trying to defend the city that *Fortune* magazine says works. We should be spending these five weeks in talking to you about how we might erase the blight we have in this wonderful city of ours. We need your help. Why don't you give us this help?

The Chair: Ms Gardner, I'm sorry to interrupt but we've gone well beyond the 10 minutes. Thank you for your presentation.

LOIS CORBETT

The Chair: Would Lois Corbett please come forward. Good evening, Ms Corbett.

Ms Lois Corbett: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to present some concerns I have about the bill you have in front of you. I'll try to keep an eye on the clock, because I don't have a prepared text. I can sometimes take a breath and talk for 10 minutes and not actually breathe in.

My name is Lois Corbett. I live in the St Lawrence Market area of Toronto, which is in Councillor Kyle Rae's city of Toronto ward and Councillor Olivia Chow's Metro ward. Minister Al Leach is my member of provincial Parliament, and my MP is Bill Graham. I vote at every opportunity. I read the newsletters from all my different levels of democratically elected representatives. I don't necessarily agree with each and every one of them. I think they're all uniquely different people working as hard as they can with different agendas to best represent my interests. But because I exercise my right to vote and pay attention to the political system, I believe that my elected representatives need to listen to me.

I also work both for the Toronto Environmental Alliance and for the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. I'll spend the bulk of my time talking about what I think are the major environmental implications of the bill you have in front of you.

I've spent the last 10 years working for and with beautiful people in beautiful cities all over the country, fighting to preserve and protect what I think Canadians, whether they're from Toronto, the Northwest Territories or St John's, Newfoundland, believe quite strongly in: the protection and preservation of the natural and human environments within which they live. I really can only talk about what I know.

I know we need several levels of government to deal with the important issue of environmental and human health protection. I know, much as I don't like them a lot of the time, that we need a federal government to enact national environmental standards so that every fish pond and every lake and every stream — and every fish, whether it's in the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean — can entertain a national standard of environmental protection so that people who live in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto or Saskatoon have their right to breathe the same quality of air; that it is not determined by where you live but because we have a democratically elected federal government that should act on behalf of its national citizenry to invoke national environmental standards.

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I also know we need the federal government to represent concerned Canadian citizens in the international forum when it comes to expressing Canadians' love for natural systems. I know we need a provincial government to deal with the day-to-day monitoring and research part of environmental protection — environmental protection for human health's sake, for our own health's sake, but also for natural systems' sake. I know the Ontario government needs to be quite active in working with governments on the other side of the border in protecting the Great Lakes, for example. It's important that this one government realize that on behalf of its own citizens and on behalf of the nation, it has to work to reduce toxics both coming in from the United States and also generated here.

The Ontario level of government, the provincial level of government, is the best one to deal one-on-one with polluters, as they have sort of an intimate concern and interest in trying to keep industrial polluters in the province and contributing to the economy. They also have that direct one-on-one access to them so that we can draw up provincial plans for both pollution reduction and pollution prevention.

When it comes to the municipal level of government, what can they do to work to protect local environments? What municipal governments do, unlike the other two levels of government, is they actually do things. They set up compost programs. They set up waste reduction programs. The Ontario government suggests that as a society, people who live in Ontario, we have a goal of reducing our waste by 25%, but the Minister of Environment of Ontario doesn't tell every city or every person how to do that. Municipal councils listen to people in their neighbourhoods, ask them to come in and deliver programs so that people, ordinary citizens, your next-door neighbours, and each of you, no doubt, can actively participate in diverting more garbage from landfills and from incineration in the province. Only by the things that municipal councils do can we actually take that step forward and participate.

I can give you a couple of really concrete examples about that. For the last nine months I've been quite active with the provincial Ministry of Environment in the development of a smog management plan for Ontario. As you can imagine, industry is well represented, the envi-

ronmental community is represented, and the human health community, public health system, is quite represented around the table. It takes us about two months' worth of meetings to come to a definition of what exactly are the particulates that are having an impact on our young people's ability to breathe; what is it exactly that's causing more and more of our children to have asthma in Toronto? A small committee at the Metro level of government or at the city level — the city of Toronto or East York — can actually get right down, talk to the fleet's manager at those cities, and say: "Let's start buying cleaner-fuelled vehicles. What would it take? What are the financing mechanisms we need in order to take that important step forward? Will it contribute to protecting local air quality? Is this a good step to take?" Buying cleaner-fuelled cars is what I call a "thing"; it's a thing that municipal councils can do.

The provincial level of government can orchestrate and bring people together to come up with a good definition of what needs to be acted on. Municipal governments can actually deliver programs to protect people's human health and natural environments. There's lots of stories like that.

I've worked in the past 10 years on national programs. At one time I served, believe it or not, on the advisory team for the green plan when Lucien Bouchard was the federal Minister of the Environment, way back then. I've worked with the provincial government and I've worked with all area municipalities within the GTA, whether it's been on waste, pesticides, air quality, PVCs, toxics in the Great Lakes. My experience has shown me that all levels of government, when it comes to environmental protection and protecting human health, have their own role to play.

Smaller governments, like smaller ecosystems, can do things. They can change more quickly, they can adapt more quickly, and they can respond to pressing changes in the environment. Larger governments, big megacity governments, will not be able to, one, deliver the programs we need in order to hold back the pollution and toxics that are affecting our lives, but also will not respond with the quickness and the adaptability and flexibility or diversity — again mimicking a natural system — that we need in order to deal with impending natural disasters like climate change.

My bottom line is that local government is in the best position to protect local environmental concerns, and green cities and locally protected small parts of the ecosystem ultimately add up to larger bodies that are protected. The realist in me wants to say, "I think you should fiddle around the edges of your transition team, of your transition process, and fix and put in provisions for environmental protection to make sure the environmental and human health impacts of what this bill is going to do are not forgotten in the tax fight and in the political fights that no doubt will result." But I think the fundamental message is: Small is better and small is beautiful.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Corbett. You've very effectively used up your allotted time. Thank you for coming forward and making your presentation this evening.

GLENN WEBSTER

The Chair: Would Glenn Webster please come forward. Good evening, Mr Webster. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Glenn Webster: Good evening. I'm glad of this opportunity to be able to speak to you. With respect, I'm addressing my remarks primarily to the nine government members, who I believe continue to need to be reminded of democracy and responsible governance. My colleagues from the opposition I believe do understand these principles, and I know they are working hard to try and enlighten the rest of you.

I only have 10 minutes — I won't take 10 minutes — so I can only deal with two topics, although if I had three or four hours I'd love to cover much more ground. I'm going to restrict my comments to (1) the lack of democratic process in the manner in which this legislation is being introduced and (2) the inadequacy of representation for the proposed new unicity.

In our parliamentary system, when a party seeks a mandate to form a government, it presents a platform to the electorate. Where was megacity on your platform? Where was the mega-dumping, the downloading of essential services from the province to the municipalities? I didn't see it. If you had any integrity, I think you'd call an election and seek a legitimate mandate from the people for these proposals.

In our parliamentary system, when a party gains power, it's not a licence to behave like a tinpot banana republic and abandon all consultation and become utterly totalitarian. When Bob Rae surprised himself by forming the government before this present one, he didn't nationalize the banks, he didn't double the welfare rate, he didn't give in to every union demand. I believe he attempted to act in a responsible manner and he didn't amaze us with some "common sense" or other revolution.

In our parliamentary system, again, we're used to consultation when major changes are proposed. Commissions and public hearings are an opportunity for concerned citizens — or special interest groups, as the Premier uses that term — to voice their concerns.

What did you give us? The Who Does-Whats commission, or, more precisely, the behind-closed-doors commission. David Crombie himself is a decent and qualified person to comment on municipal matters, but the process itself was indecent, undemocratic, elitist, inappropriate.

What is ironic is that you ignored many of his proposals anyway. You picked only those that you'd already decided upon. I fear it's probably the same with this process. I hope you're not just pretending to listen to people like me. I fear, though, you have decided to go ahead with the legislation anyway, and in many ways it makes this process a sham.

Again, in a parliamentary democracy we're not used to having legislation proceeding with unseemly haste. We don't like to be bullied, railroaded, bulldozed. We don't appreciate having stuff rammed down our throats. Ordinary citizens like myself have day jobs. That's why there are a lot of spelling mistakes on this page. We need time to digest these proposals. You take advantage of this confusion. You hope people will say: "Well, what's the point? They've already made up their minds anyway."

This is not a Common Sense Revolution, it's a confusion revolution, and as history shows us, most revolutions are confusions.

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A comment on the trustees: Notwithstanding the oft-quoted line that municipalities are creatures of the province, as they indeed are, Ontario towns have almost always enjoyed some form of autonomy, albeit somewhat tenuous at times, since before Confederation. In fact, since 1215 and Magna Carta, most places following British parliamentary democracy have devolved some degree of power to municipalities.

In the last municipal election I voted for a mayor, councillors and school board representatives. That's my democratic right through precedence or tradition. How dare you take that right away from me by appointing trustees to oversee these properly elected people? How demeaning to our city governments, how patronizing, how undemocratic.

Just think for a moment. Our Prime Minister, concerned about the actions of the Ontario government, mindful that they're about halfway into their term and fearful that they want to change the system so much that it's not going to be fixable by successive governments, decides on this basis to appoint federal trustees to oversee their actions. How would you like that?

I know that democracy is slow and cumbersome and there are exceptional circumstances when it has to be put on hold, such as times of war or major ecological disasters. Are we now at war?

On the governance of the proposed unicity, 44 councillors for more than 2 million people is not enough. If we believe in some sort of representation according to population, how can you justify Toronto getting 10 times fewer municipal reps than North Bay? How can a councillor really effectively deal with the nitty-gritty municipal matters for 53,000 people? With this logic, would cities of less than 53,000 people have just one councillor, or perhaps no councillors?

My 10 minutes doesn't allow me to address downloading, but I must simply register my protest at proposing to use a regressive poll type property tax to pay for services that should properly be paid for by progressive geared-to-income taxes. That's fundamental. This area needs masses more study, and we certainly would do well to look at how other municipalities in North America and Europe deal with this.

In summary, the government's whole style is hurried, confusing, anti-democratic, authoritarian and disrespectful to the electorate. I agree with Speaker Stockwell that, by extension, the government is contemptuous of the House and of the province, and you just don't get it, do you?

I look forward to joining the freedom march on February 15, when I shall proudly march with the city of York battalion down Yonge Street: no weapons, just banners and posters. I thank you for hearing me.

Mr Colle: Mr Webster, I think you've brought an interesting point to the debate here. You mention poll tax. As you know, the same minister tried to introduce a poll tax in Bill 26, and he said if there was a poll tax in the bill, the right to have a poll tax, he would resign. As you know, he was forced to amend the bill to exclude a

specific poll tax. But I think what the minister has actually done, through the back door, is to introduce a poll tax, which is basically the downloading tax.

Mr Webster: I think that's an accurate description of what took place. That's the way the minister thinks.

Mr Colle: In essence, the people of Metropolitan Toronto will have to pay a new tax for social housing, welfare, child care and long-term care. They'll pay it more than anywhere else, because as you know, we have a disproportionate number of seniors; 89,000 children live in poverty. We also have social housing; up to 50% of the social housing in the GTA is in Metro. What we're really given with the megacity is a new mega-poll tax.

Mr Webster: Megacity, mega-dump, mega-taxes, and it doesn't take an economist or mathematician to figure that inevitably, from the best information we've got, without prejudice, property taxes will rise substantially.

The Chair: Thank you for coming forward this evening, Mr Webster.

FORREST LUNN

The Chair: Would Forrest Lunn please come forward. Good evening, Mr Lunn, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Forrest Lunn: Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak. I just want to say that unlike several of the people who have spoken before me, I'm a beginner at this kind of thing and the reason I've begun, belatedly, is because of Bill 103 and my very strong feelings of opposition to it. I believe that despite the reassurances of Al Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, our quality of life would suffer if Bill 103 were to become law and a megacity called Toronto came into existence.

For one thing, if Bill 103 became law, the citizens of the new city would have approximately half the number of municipal councillors they have now. I didn't want to put it down on paper because I wasn't 100% sure of the figures, but I think it's a matter of 106 being reduced to 44. In other words, the members of the new city council would each be expected to look after the interests of approximately twice as many people as they do presently.

Moreover, as members of a megacity council they would have to balance, as do the present councillors, the interests of their own constituents against those of the residents of the other wards. But in the megacity the needs and interests of the whole population would be far more varied than they are in any of the present municipalities. If the megacity were to come into existence, the councillors serving the citizens of Toronto and the other municipalities would, by comparison to the present councillors, be distracted and overworked.

I will illustrate this point with a bit of autobiography. For the last three and a half years my wife and I have lived in the east end of Toronto just across the street from Monarch Park. The park is beautiful at all times of the year, but for the first two summers in the neighbourhood our nights were made miserable by the noise of pool-hoppers and partying adolescents. Occasionally we complained to the police, but at best this was a very short-term solution and the next night the noise would start again.

At the beginning of last summer, sceptically and as a last resort, I contacted our councillor, Steve Ellis. He listened sympathetically and said he would see what he could do. He spoke to the police and to the parks board. Within days a security patrol was visiting the park two or three times a night. The pool-hopping was dramatically reduced and the partying stopped entirely.

This incident had a powerful effect on me. It made me realize that sympathetic, responsive local government does improve our lives, and it made me realize that a local government structure that gives councillors enough time to listen to the ordinary problems of ordinary citizens is something worth fighting for. If my councillor had ignored me or made promises but failed to act, I would probably not be in this room this evening.

The reduced representation it would bring is only one of the many objections that can be made against the idea of municipal amalgamation. Another is that a megacity would inevitably be a cumbersome, unmanageable thing. The municipalities are simply too different from one another to be governed by a single body. A vast automobile-dependent domain whose centre is an isolated, enclosed shopping mall can be forcibly amalgamated with a much older, much more densely populated municipality, where everyone lives within walking distance of a shop-lined main street.

But is it possible to do this without damaging the precious and fragile sense of community that is characteristic of all the Metro municipalities? Is it possible to do this without alienating the citizenry, without making them feel that government is something that is imposed upon them from above, that they are powerless, that there is no point in complaining or suggesting, no point in participating?

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In making these points I am of course speaking intuitively. However, my attention has recently been drawn to two scholarly studies of the results of forced municipal amalgamation in Sweden. Both these studies confirm my intuitions. I can provide the references to anyone who is interested; in fact, I've got footnotes at the bottom of the page.

My next point is not about the merits of the megacity proposal itself; it is about a noteworthy and I think symptomatic difference between the people who oppose the idea and the people who support it. The opponents of the plan, whether they are journalists, politicians or just ordinary citizens, all have a great deal to say. They make dozens of different objections to amalgamation, all of them plausible, and as we have seen, they can find support for their position in the books and articles of experts and academics, books and articles written long before most Torontonians had heard the word "megacity." One of the most difficult parts of being against the plan in fact is keeping the various objections to it straight in one's mind and deciding which one to use at a particular point.

The proponents of the plan seem to have the opposite problem: They can't find anything to say in support of their position, not anything that makes much sense, at any rate. The members of the public who support the idea of the megacity remain almost completely silent, perhaps

rousing themselves, when challenged, to say, "If it's good enough for Mike, it's good enough for me," or words to that effect. The cabinet ministers, the rest of the Conservative caucus, the few journalists who support the bill seem able to defend it only with cliché-ridden rhetoric or evasive mumblings.

As an example of these evasive mumblings, here is what Al Leach said in an interview with the *East York Mirror* when, after having said that "most of" the studies done in the past 30 years had recommended amalgamation, he was asked to name one study that had done so:

"We know...I know that the...I'm not sure whether we've got the quotes from the Robarts study and a number of others...they were...they backed off politically. I really believe that it's the right thing to do and I think the vast majority of people in the greater Toronto area think it's the right thing too."

I've made three points: first, that diminished representation would certainly lead to diminished quality of life; second, that because of the physical size, the large population and the diversity of the municipalities, a megacity would be an unmanageable monster whose residents would feel alienated from their government; and finally, that the opponents of the megacity are noticeably better at defending their position than the advocates of the idea are at defending theirs.

Moving on from my last point, I want to ask a question: In light of the fact that there are so many things to say against the megacity and so little to be said in its favour, is it possible that our government really does not care whether the megacity plan is in itself a good idea, possible that for it a megacity is just a means to some other end?

The government would deny this, of course, but perhaps that is only because they are afraid to tell the people what they really have up their sleeve. This is not an original suggestion. Many commentators have suggested that the government has an ulterior motive and they have come up with various theories as to what it might be.

Colin Vaughan, a *Globe and Mail* columnist, says that it is not so much that the government wants a megacity but that it thinks one large municipality with a tailor-made and compliant administrative structure will not be able to put up effective opposition to its other restructuring plans such as the downloading of social services and the reduction in the number of school boards.

John Sewell, a former mayor of Toronto, thinks that the government, determined to eliminate the deficit and reduce income tax, is trying to steal the municipal reserve fund.

The president of the board of trade, in an interview with Michael Valpy, has said that he doesn't really believe amalgamation would save money but that the board of trade is still in favour of it because having only one government to deal with would make it easier for it to promote Toronto as a place to do business.

There's very likely a little truth in all these suggestions. After all, there's no reason to believe that this government must have only one ulterior motive for something it does. Still, all three suggestions are somewhat conjectural. Who is to say what these people are

thinking? But two things are clear: First, whatever its ulterior motive is, the government will be able to achieve its ends more easily if it can drastically limit the power of Toronto and the other Metro municipalities; second, Bill 103 is carefully and cleverly written to give them that power.

Reading the bill, it is impossible not to wonder what the purpose of the elected council of the proposed city would be. Section 16 of the act stipulates that a so-called transition team will be formed to "establish the city's basic organizational structure." The team will simply be appointed by the government, presumably acting in secret. It would have the power to place restrictions on how much the new city could spend or raise. It could also order the privatization of municipal services. It would have no duty whatsoever to consult the public on these fundamental matters and it could not be held responsible for anything it does. Section 18 of the bill reads as follows, "The decisions of the transition team are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by a court."

On top of all this, the government has provided for the possibility that the so-called transition might go on forever. Section 12 reads, "On or after January 31, 1998 the minister may, by order, dissolve the transition team."

If this government, so lustful for power, gets away with taking control of the municipal government of the six municipalities, then municipal democracy in our region will be dead and municipal democracy everywhere in the province, and everywhere in Canada, will be at risk. But democracy is not yet dead in Toronto and the people, the citizenry, can still stop this government from destroying it. I believe they will.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Lunn, for your presentation. You've used your 10 minutes. Thank you for coming and making your presentation.

ANNE MORAIS

The Chair: Would Anne Morais please come forward. Good evening and welcome to the committee.

Ms Anne Morais: Thank you. My name is Anne Morais. I have lived in Toronto from my first day. I grew up in North York, completed three degrees at the university in Toronto and now I live and work in the city of Toronto. I pay my taxes, I support small theatre by attending pay-what-you-can Sundays, I pay loonies to squeegee kids who clean my window, I feel comfortable walking around downtown and I gloat to my non-Torontonian friends that we have a host of ethnic neighbourhoods with many wonderful restaurants.

I oppose Bill 103. I would like to talk about one point with respect to amalgamation: services. I will not talk about the effect of amalgamation on the downtown core and how it would hollow out all the businesses, culture and life because I understand that a provincial government is far more responsible for taking care of the province as a whole and not focusing on individual cities.

I will not talk about the loss of democracy by the appointment of the three trustees because my voice at this hearing is a demonstration of democratic principles. In addition, I will not carry on about how amalgamation will personally affect my life because sometimes personal

concerns are less important than broad social concerns, similar to the fact, I am sure, that Minister Leach's support for this bill is not fuelled by his desire to pay back the Metro municipalities for the heartache they gave him when he was the commissioner of the TTC.

I plan to address the inevitable changes to services ushered in by privatization and the reduced number of trained personnel. Privatization and the contracting out of services are not new suggestions. As well, reducing the sum expertise of service providers, such as the civilianization of police services, outlined in the KPMG report, and the reduction of the number of full-time firefighters implied in Bill 84, are ideas on the table.

Privatization and the decrease of expertise will not only affect service administration but will also affect service performance, delivery and reliability. Two results are the increase of costs and the decrease in service value expressed in terms of safety. The increase of cost individuals will be forced to incur, either by instituting user fees or increasing the charges already in place, is not a far stretch from reality.

A clear example is what happened when Britain privatized their water supply. Not only did the quality of water diminish, but the supply was delayed and costs increased, leaving some people with no water.

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Cost and quality of service are two inherent competitors in the free market. A seven-year-old child who rides his bicycle past one block of shops in his neighbourhood realizes that the people working in the stores are there to make money. He also notices that two candy stores next to each other are going to compete for the same market by either lowering cost, which will inevitably be followed by a decrease in facility upkeep, quality of candy and presentation of products, or by charging a little more and providing quality service and candies.

If the child has only 10 cents and is limited by money, he'll purchase the cheaper candy. If the child fancies particular candies with particular flavours, he'll pay a little more for what he wants. Any seven-year-old interested in satisfying his craving for candy has a clear understanding of the free market.

Higher fees for service are bound to occur when services are privatized or, as in the experience of the child who only has 10 cents, the quality of service may decrease.

I understand there are arguments in favour of higher fees for service, such as forcing individuals to prioritize expenditures, which at the same time works to lower the deficit. For example, if garbage collection costs according to weight, then people will be more aware of what they throw out and possibly save more things. The effects of increasing costs for services need far more attention than this short piece. They need honest attention and investigation. What happens when people cannot afford particular services? Are they going to throw out less garbage, or are they going to drop their garbage at public parks, if there are any, or are they going to dump their garbage anywhere on the street, or are they going to keep it in their homes until they have enough money?

A second and possibly more grave result of privatization is the threat to safety. The reduction of trained staff

also speaks to the issue of safety. Do private companies care about protecting and serving the citizens? Is their main responsibility to the people or to their shareholders? A clear example of the role of business versus the role of government was illustrated in the past few months by the events of the transport companies and the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Al Palladini. For clarity's sake I want to emphasize the following as an example as competing principles, not as an opportunity to criticize any governments, current or past.

Trucks were doing their job of delivering products from point A to point B. The trucks were in fine order because products arrived and the companies were making money. Once in a while a wheel flies off and kills innocent people. Outraged at the number of deaths due to flying truck parts, Minister Palladini makes an angered announcement to the trucking companies that they had better bring all their trucks up to standard, or else. Why was he or anyone so surprised that the trucks were not maintained to a proper standard?

It is the government's responsibility to make sure the trucks are safe by enforcing a standard by whatever means they feel necessary. It is not the company's responsibility to protect the community; it is the company's responsibility to function as an efficient, profit-oriented organization. The federal laws of this country, as well as the laws of each province and territory, dictate that directors must manage the business and affairs of their corporations with a proper business purpose. Both the provincial Business Corporations Act and the federal one hold directors liable to shareholders for decisions made for purposes other than the best interests of their shareholders. The community at large is not a shareholder in private corporations. As such, corporations are not permitted to act in the best interests of the community.

Plowman J. of the English Chancery Courts held that a corporation which had distributed sums of money to its employees had breached its shareholder obligations and that such a distribution, although motivated by fairness, was against corporate law and could not be allowed. The following is a quote from that judgement:

"The defendants were prompted by motives which, however laudable, and however enlightened from the point of view of industrial relations were such as the law does not recognize as a sufficient justification. Stripped of all its side issues, the essence of the matter is this, that the directors of the defendant company are proposing that a very large part of its funds should be given to its former employees in order to benefit those employees rather than the company, and that is an application of the company's funds which the law, as I understand it, will not allow."

If a company was not permitted to consider the interests of its employees, individuals with whom that company has intimate relations, individuals on whom that company relies, then *prima facie* a company cannot consider the interests of the community. It is the government's responsibility to protect the unprotected. If trucks are unsafe, then the government failed to protect its citizens. Firefighters serve community; police officers serve and protect. I do not want to live in a community

in which police officers are obliged by law to serve and protect shareholders.

Issues of safety come up in many services. I do not need to expand on the effects of poorly trained firefighters or police officers or repair personnel or parks and rec staff and so on. Issues of safety must be recognized. The main motivation for private companies is profit and any other factor is secondary. On the other hand, it is the government's responsibility to protect, help and answer to its citizens.

This is a plea to balance the desire to cut costs with maintaining a life of quality. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. We have a couple of moments here for questions from the NDP.

Mr Silipo: Ms Morais, thank you very much for your presentation. I don't think any other presenter, at least whom I've heard, has focused as much as you have on the question of services, particularly privatization and the impact that will come. Our sense is that one of the things, and I think this is what you're saying, that come out of the megacity is a lesser ability for citizens to actually have an impact, through their elected representatives, on the question of safety, on the question of services overall, because the quality can go nowhere but down as a result of what we're seeing in front of us. Is that a fair way to sum it up?

Ms Morais: Yes, definitely.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much.

HAMISH WILSON

The Vice-Chair: Next I'd like to have Hamish Wilson, please. Welcome.

Mr Hamish Wilson: Thank you. Good evening. To begin, I am not a member of the NDP, nor of the Liberals, and I certainly am not a PC nor a Harris Conservative.

There are many objectionable aspects of this bill, especially around process. This is a very hasty process. Perhaps that's part of the explode-and-conquer mentality. I am appalled at the placement of duly elected representatives under unelected, unaccountable trustees who would appear not to have any fixed limit on their mandates.

It is completely wrong to have a clause which tries to remove the actions of these trustees from limits of law. It is also grossly unfair to have one set of processes for other regions in Ontario and a lack of process in Toronto.

Other speakers have indicated the abusive and bullying nature of this regime, and I concur. What you are doing is the opposite of what you said you would do prior to the election, according to Paul Pagnuelo of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation in Ontario.

You are misinforming the House and the public with propaganda. You have a majority in the House and you can and did vote down any rebuke.

This is an enlargement of a photograph in that particular flyer, and where is this picture of Toronto taken from? My sense is that it is a composite of at least three pictures patched together to seem like one: this one, that one and that one. I'd like to know for sure, for instance, that the houses actually are in Toronto. I'm not sure and I must admit I consider this image a lie, a subtle trick to

imply urban friendliness, which the bill doesn't have. It's too bad we can't get honesty in this instance, and the overall effort costs a lot of money which could have been used for keep some women's shelters open. No, I don't trust you with education either.

It's not going to save money by itself. Professor Andrew Sancton from Western university and Wendell Cox, a former adviser to Ronald Reagan, have both indicated that amalgamations cost more, not less, and Mr Cox indicates there is less access to councillors as well. Sure, the Harris regime might dismiss these experts because they're paid for their services by the city of Toronto, the object of this hostile takeover, but even the chief author of the quickie KPMG report indicated that he couldn't provide examples of savings nor assurances of savings without reduced service levels. Please make yourself aware of the Cox and Sancton viewpoint. I just happen to have an extra copy of the Wendell Cox report in case anybody would like it here.

The overall impact of the mega-dump, beginning with Bill 103, is that it will worsen tax inequities between the more compact urban form and the sprawl of the 905 region. This will kill Metro Toronto as it worsens current tax imbalances.

If you want to save big money, consider the words of economist Pam Blais in a background paper to the Golden commission. She notes that "a conservative estimate would suggest that a total of about \$700 million to \$1 billion per year could be saved in the GTA by accommodating growth in more efficient urban patterns." You're doing the exact opposite again and committing the one level of taxpayer to more costs.

Suburbs are subsidized. Why don't you tackle the subsidies to the 905ers and get cars off welfare? A Globe editorial of January 12, 1996 indicates:

"The biggest red-ink-bleeding, cash-gobbling, robbing-empty-pocketed-Peter-to-pay-comfortable-Paul government program is the low-density urban form known as the suburb."

Cars are subsidized. I have enclosed figures from five North American studies that indicate an annual avoided cost of automobility per vehicle of between \$1,000 and \$4,600 per year. There are some big bucks to be saved by stopping the freer ride that cars get — not that I'm saying they aren't expensive to operate and run, and not that there wasn't money in transit either.

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One of the major areas of avoiding costs is in climate change, what I would term a major atmospheric iceberg that is looming as part of the natural debt. Climate change can only get worse with the systemic trashing of compact urban form because of the reliance of the more suburban-built form on automobiles. The federal government, in its outlook for the first ministers' conference in December last year, was told by Natural Resources Canada, "Transportation is the largest contributor to emissions both in absolute and growth terms." Here is a little chart and its exponential growth — it's this one right there — going up, up, up, out of sight.

The accompanying chart, which is in the package, shows the exponential growth in the transportation sector while the Antarctic ice shelf is breaking up today.

Systemic trashing of the more compact urban form will speed up climate change and bring on heat waves, tornadoes and windstorms, forest fires, pest outbreaks, extra freeze-thaw cycles and downpours. Ask the insurance industry about the realities and real costs of climate change, though, please. Don't take my word for it.

This brings up another area of process abuse and illegality. Matters which are to impact our environment should be posted on the environmental registry, as I understand it. This has not been done, and you're in contempt of another set of procedures and adding on to the natural debt.

If the objective of Bill 103 isn't a power grab, if it isn't to raid the reserve funds of municipalities, set the stage for privatization and ease the dumping of the debt and tax break down to the municipalities, if instead you actually want to save some money, which I agree with, here are some suggestions: Scrap the Red Hill expressway in Hamilton — there's \$100 million; institute some user-pay, or usury, as it might be termed, on the 401 and other existing highways, especially for trucks; look at the overall costs of automobility on the province, that is, total social costs of collisions, which the previous government estimated at about \$9 billion per year; and invest in more benign alternatives, which for transit must include the examples of Curitiba in Brazil and not the Sheppard subway. Stop trashing compact urban form and stop subsidizing the suburbs.

I think I've forgotten a book I wanted to show you, but I'll just mention the title, *Men Are Not Cost-Effective*. Very interesting.

You want options to municipal governance? It's not perfect here but it's not as broken as you think it is. I agree with Morden Yolles — he's a structural engineer — that a structure with six supports is better than one. I would suggest that maybe we should concentrate on solving the problems with trucks on the highways first before trashing Toronto.

I'd like to take some time to play into the record some commentary I've been able to tape from a couple of meetings, if I may just set up my tape recorder very quickly.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): That's not appropriate. Madam Chair, it's personal presentations with a deputation. It's the same rules as in the chamber.

Mr Wilson: It's for information, ma'am.

The Vice-Chair: Yes, I just remind you that your time is being taken up by this.

Mr Wilson: Yes, I agree and I'm happy to have my time taken up by this.

Mrs Marland: I thought perhaps the deputant would like to read a paragraph that he missed in the reading of his brief. He wanted to have a complete record.

Mr Wilson: Yes, also, because there has been friction about some comments that have been made about East York and the intent to dispose of the city hall there, for instance —

Audio presentation.

Mrs Marland: On a point of order, Madam Chair: It is not permitted to have electrical devices in committees or in the chamber, and committees operate by the same rules as the House.

Mr Colle: Shhhh.

Mrs Marland: I'm making a point of order, Mr Colle.

Mr Colle: I'm trying to listen.

Mrs Marland: I'm sorry, we can't change the rules.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): On a point of order, Madam Chair: This kind of situation ought to be ruled out of order. You wouldn't be able to use a tape recorder in the House; you can't use a cell phone in the House; you can't use a VCR in the House; you can't use a radio in the House. The same rules in the House apply to a committee of this Legislature.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Hastings —

Mr Hastings: Your ruling, please.

The Vice-Chair: There has been precedent.

Mr Hastings: What would the precedent be, then?

Mr Wilson: That was the most important segment. I apologize for transgressing any rules in the House.

Mr Silipo: You didn't.

Mr Wilson: It was because I feel, as Mr Prue has pointed out, that the land which the Memorial Gardens came from was from the Royal Canadian Legion. Now, if you want to disrespect the legion, that's your choice. I think what Mr Prue is up against, though, is a lot of misinformation.

I don't know if it would be fair to Mr Gilchrist to play a quote that I have here from a meeting, but I don't know that he's actually really listened to the message that's there. I understand Mr Prue has tried to confirm the record with Mr Gilchrist. I will not play this particular tape, because Mr Gilchrist wouldn't be here.

To conclude, or to go on a little bit further —

The Vice-Chair: No, I'm sorry, Mr Wilson. You have exceeded your time. Thank you very much.

Mr Wilson: I have exceeded my time now?

The Vice-Chair: Yes.

Mr Wilson: Thank you very much. I would suggest that you withdraw the bill.

PETER RUSSELL

The Vice-Chair: Mr Peter Russell? Good evening, Mr Russell.

Mr Peter Russell: Thank you. I wish to address the broad constitutional and democratic dimensions of Bill 103.

Now, from a narrow constitutional perspective, Bill 103 may not violate the formal law of the Constitution, but I want to remind you that there's much more to our Constitution than its formal legal text.

An important part of our constitutional system of government are the practices and principles of governance that have become a treasured part of our public heritage. That part of our constitutional process works through a social contract that functions over time whereby each generation inherits the practices and institutions of governance that have worked well, that have stood the test of time, that embody the wisdom of preceding generations. Each generation endeavours to improve on those institutions and practices before passing them on to succeeding generations. Such is the essence of a constitutional system that is both progressive and conservative.

A treasured part of the governmental inheritance of us, the people of Upper Canada, of Canada West, of Ontario and Toronto, is our success in operating a deeply democratic form of local government. It is indeed a governmental practice that has worked well, that has helped make our city of Toronto the envy of the world. It is something that, no doubt, can be improved, but only in a manner that enhances and enriches the democratic quality of local government, rather than diluting and subverting it, as I fear Bill 103 does, both in its objective and in the means adopted to achieve that objective.

The objective of the bill, which is to fold six cities of moderate size into one, will create a city which is at once both too large and too small. It will be too big to provide that sensitive and accessible management of local affairs that's been a hallmark of our urban democracy. The fact that Toronto, unlike the huge American cities to the south, is a liveable city whose neighbourhoods reflect and respond to the needs and preferences of its residents is no accident. It is primarily the result of a system of local government that is close to its residents and responsive to their interests and ideas.

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And yet while this new megacity will dilute our urban democracy, it will not provide a broad enough foundation for the effective planning and direction of economic development which is so badly needed in the huge urban sprawl that stretches from Burlington to Oshawa. For this coordinating and planning capacity a much bigger base than the proposed new city is needed, something at least as wide as the greater Toronto area. That has been the conclusion of all the committees and commissions that have studied this issue in the past.

So here in this megacity plan to be achieved through Bill 103 we have the worst of all possible worlds: a city too large to preserve and enhance our tradition of urban democracy yet too small to meet the planning and coordinating needs of the sprawling urbanopolis of which Toronto forms a part.

Nor is there any evidence that significant savings in costs or gains in efficiency will be achieved through this amalgamation plan. On the contrary, all the evidence and experience is that the most cost-effective units of urban government are cities of moderate size and that there are no economies of scale in cities beyond the million population level. So we are being asked to risk serious erosion of our strong and proven system of municipal democracy for a purpose which has simply not been made out. It is difficult to understand how the authors of this plan could conceive of it as an essential part of a commonsense revolution.

If the objective of this bill is unconvincing, the means by which the bill would achieve the objective are simply appalling. What bothers me most are the provisions for the transitional year, which, if we are to believe the bill, began back in December. During this year municipal democracy in Metropolitan Toronto is to be put in mothballs.

I refer in particular to the two teams of appointed officials, the board of trustees and the transition team, which, if this bill goes through as it is, will for a year govern Toronto fiscally and permanently mould its future.

Both these bodies of appointed officials will be accountable, not to this Legislative Assembly, nor to the people, nor even to the courts, but only to the minister. That minister will, in effect, become the czar of Toronto.

I am particularly concerned about the transition team, which has received less attention in the media than the board of trustees. Among its awesome powers are, and I read from subsection 16(3) — I'm sure you've had these sections read to you before, but I'll do it again. It will have the power to:

“(c) establish the new city's basic organizational structure;

“(d) hire...departments heads and other employees as the transition team considers necessary to ensure the good management of the new city....”

If the bill goes through and these clauses remain, it will mean that the council of the new city that is elected less than a year from now would be elected to run a city whose structure it has had no part in shaping and with personnel it has had no role in selecting.

I ask those who support the objective of the bill, and there are many on this committee who do, why is it necessary to drive it through with such an anti-democratic sledgehammer? Why? I can think of only one rationale for this machinery. The authors of this bill simply do not trust the people of Toronto and their elected officials to be partners in creating this new municipal structure. A government that so blatantly demonstrates its distrust of the people is in danger of the people withdrawing their trust in it.

In conclusion, I urge the government which is sponsoring this legislation to move more slowly and more carefully with such a big structural change. Unlike ordinary legislation, legislation such as this, once the changes it would effect are in place, is very difficult and very expensive to reverse. The transition costs of packing up seven municipal councils and replacing them with a new structure will be very great, amounting not just to tens but likely to hundreds of millions of dollars. That is why it is almost irresponsible for those who oppose the change to promise if elected to office that they will spend yet more millions putting back what has been taken apart.

Democratic government should only undertake structural change of this kind when it is acting on the basis of a broad consensus with a well-thought-out plan. That foundation is sorely lacking in this case. The government has a mandate neither from the people nor from the experts for its megacity plan. It is not an essential part of the agenda the government was elected to achieve. It is arbitrary and without a cogent rationale. It risks doing grievous harm to one of our finest traditions of governance. It will solve none of our practical problems and yet will be very difficult to reverse once it is in place.

I urge its supporters to reconsider, and to listen to the people in the forthcoming referendums. Of course, these referendums in a narrow legal sense cannot bind the government. However, I hope that those whom we have elected to govern Ontario for a few years will feel bound by a deeper constitutional obligation to respect the legacy of democratic municipal government that has taken generations to develop and that has served us so well, and not insist on restructuring it in haste and for no clear

purpose, and in a manner that is so out of keeping with its democratic spirit.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you, Mr Russell. Government members, you have a minute. Mr Hardeman.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Thank you very much for your presentation. You mentioned in your comments your concerns not only with the trustees but more so with the implementation committee. Could you give us some advice or comments on, accepting that you disagree with this process, how you would envision the transition if you were to support the whole proposal.

Mr Russell: In the first place, I would do it in partnership with the councils that have been elected, that have the people who are far more knowledgeable than the people on this committee or the minister and his staff about municipal structures. It should be very much a partnership arrangement. You can only do that, of course, when there's a coincidence between the views and outlooks of the government of the province and the people who have been elected in the municipality to govern the municipality.

In other words, if you insist on forcing this down the throats of Torontonians and the people they've elected, you can't do it properly. That's why you first of all have to persuade the people this is the thing to do. You have to develop a mandate and then do it with the existing councils. That's the way to go.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Russell, for appearing tonight.

TRICIA POSTLE

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call on Tricia Postle, please. Good evening. I just want to welcome you here and explain that you have 10 minutes in which to make your presentation.

Ms Tricia Postle: Thank you very much. Ladies, gentlemen and members of the committee, you've been exposed to so much of the folksy and anecdotal in support of this bill that I'm tempted to respond in kind.

Some friends and I got together at the start of the winter because we needed some sweaters. We decided we could save some money on wool if we knit one sweater for all seven of us, and so we did. It was the right decision. Our collective body warmth balances the heat loss from 12 arm holes and six neck holes. In really cold weather, we've discovered we stay warmer by pulling in a few of the arms, and we draw straws to see who uses their hands that day.

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Winters get colder every year. We're happy to combat urban alienation and the low thermostat in one practical act. One of us did lose her job waiting tables and we are still ungainly as a group, but on the whole we're proud to be taking measures against the tradition of individualism that so dominates western consciousness. Onward, 21st century.

Members of the committee, please forgive my use of simplistic metaphor. I admit that applying such to a complex situation is often misleading, and possibly ridiculous. Unfortunately, I have yet to hear anything less ridiculous in support of Bill 103.

Have we come to a point in Ontario politics where we move further from representational democracy and closer to autocracy, baited with the promise of a big reputation, just like New York City? I love New York City. I hope to spend some years living there at some point, but no thinking person could be blind to its problems. Is it appropriate to imitate the worst aspects of a great city? It's generally known that one of New York's greatest downfalls is insufficient local and responsive government, which has been one of Metro's great strengths.

I'm going to propose another metaphor. Our communities have grown organically over time. To suggest that we will attract more international business because of simpler bylaws is like suggesting that tourists would enjoy our trees more if we dug them up and simplified their root systems. To eradicate one form of governance and impose another in the style of a hostile corporate takeover seems to me the antithesis of conservative government. Have we come to a point where we dress our communities in the worst castoffs of dog-eat-dog philosophy? Even the notorious secret meetings with trustees haven't won over the business community.

I think we should beware of simple modes of thinking. I am glad that this committee exists. It does a little bit to dispel some of my suspicions about the government's motivation at this point, and I'd be gladder if every MPP in Ontario found a few books on urban planning and perused them during the next few weeks.

Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

Mr Colle: Sorry, I wasn't in the room when you spoke and I have to excuse myself, but maybe I can just ask you a question. What is your major concern in terms of the outcome of this bill? Let's say the megacity comes about. How is it going to affect your life as an ordinary citizen?

Ms Postle: I certainly excuse you for being out of the room as you've been in the room for so many of the political actions that I've been involved with in regard to this for the last little while.

The situation of Toronto, I fear, may become one in which we avoid having any births, marriages or deaths for the time that it takes the transition team to instate a new form of government. I'm worried about the situation in which the government will be uprooted and unable to govern essentially, to fulfil its functions. When we have the period of transition, I think it's going to be a very rocky road.

Mr Colle: In terms of the period of transition, Professor Peter Russell, who just left, I think reaffirms the fact that in essence what we're going to see — we already are, in fact. Democracy is in mothballs right now for 2.5 million people and it will be in mothballs into the term of the new mega-government because, as you know, the crazy thing about this is that the transition team will hire the top bureaucrats. They will shape the structures of the new mega-government and they will report — this is the astonishing thing — as Professor Russell said, not to the Legislature, not to the courts — so they're not even subject to judicial review — and they won't report to the citizens of Toronto. For the next year or two or three —

Interjection: Ten.

Mr Colle: — or whatever, this transition team has basically taken away the right of citizens to have a say in how the most critical decisions are made in their everyday life.

Ms Postle: If I could change only one aspect of this bill, I would change sections 12 and 18 that elevate the transition team and the trustees above judicial review.

Mr Colle: As someone said yesterday or the day before, "What's the motivation?" If this is about accountability — in other words, we're trying to increase accountability, the minister says — why would you then say in legislation that the transition team especially, which is more odious than the trusteeship, I think, is not accountable to the courts and is only accountable to one man? That is scary stuff. I think somebody just mentioned that.

That is the era, as Mrs Rebeiro said earlier, of the sort of futuristic world. I don't know if you're familiar with Judge Dredd and Mega-city. I think that's what we're getting into, one-man rule essentially, above the law, above the courts. Someone said earlier, and I'm going to ask you, how could this happen in Toronto? Why have we come to this point where a government thinks it can get away with this?

Ms Postle: It seems to me that the Harris administration has been very much influenced in its style by the popular media, by theories of advertising and by certain, I'd say, fairly slipshod philosophies of business that emphasize out-and-out competitive modes of interaction that aren't suited to the government of a city.

Mr Colle: But even business believes in competition, believes in a business plan. This government has produced no business plan. All they've produced is that phoney KPMG report which has been laughed right out of the province. That's all they have, that contemptuous \$100,000 report that, as Paul Pagnuelo said, was written on Swiss cheese.

Thank you very much.

ALDO VIOLO

The Vice-Chair: I'd like to call on Aldo Violo, please. Good evening, Mr Violo, and welcome to the committee.

Mr Aldo Violo: Thank you. It was troubling following Tricia after that. I feel like I just followed a child in a dog show. She was quite eloquent and marvellous, may I say.

Mine is an overview about what is going on. I actually attempted to read Bill 103, and I say it's still not user-friendly. It's strictly exclusive language. It reminded me of our union contract with a company signed under duress. It took us another two years to find out point for point what everything meant. So out of the material that has been given to me in this short frame of time I have to amalgamate information which was suddenly dropped upon me in the last two days when they said, "You're up at 8:50 today." I tried to conclude whether I should fact you, number you to death, and I figured there are better people doing that, so this is my fear of what is going on.

What the government proposes: downloading costs to municipalities such as social assistance, long-term care, public health, housing, child care, hostels, land ambu-

lances, TTC, GO Transit, ferries, libraries and assessment delivery. Immediately I read all this, I said to myself: "What does this mean? The municipalities with the strongest tax base can handle it; others don't? Will the poor have to move from the larger city to the burbs? Will suddenly municipalities fight among each other about money, whether they should have sewers, garbage or feed those on welfare?" I don't know.

The business occupancy tax which they want to abolish — 75% of what big business pays. This is amazing. I don't clearly understand it.

Then there's this actual value assessment. Everyone keeps telling me there's this great fear that it'll be okay until the year 2005, but it will have actual market value before that, keeping everyone in a state of flux.

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Now comes the worry because of this megacity. They say that it's theoretical. The government proposes that all these theories are true, and yet we have so many facts about the megacities that exist, and not only reports: cities such as London, England, Chicago, plus many others.

In dealing with theory like the free trade, nobody really knew what was going to go on, but here we have prime examples of cities that are what Bill 103 says. This is quite scary because they seem to be ignoring the Golden and Crombie reports. Then there are two respected independent consultants who know and understand these initiatives and have been quoted that what the bill states is not true; it's quite the opposite effect. I ask the question: Why is the government rushing?

Mr Wendell Cox, the US municipal consultant, concluded that the theoretical savings would never be achieved. As one of the members stated, and he stole my hot line, it had so many holes that it was written on Swiss cheese. This is a respected consultant who deals with municipal affairs. Why are they not listening? If we have these examples, why are they ignoring them?

Then comes the next simplistic one: World organizations and groups have voted Toronto one of the best cities to work and, surprise, live in. What are we doing wrong? Why are we changing it? When the G-7 figures were here in Toronto, we got bombarded on a daily basis that we were a world-class city. Why do we need a megacity? What is the difference? Toronto works. Why change it?

Now, we could go to a major example: New York. It was tried. It went broke. It had to go to the citizens and their pension funds. Is this the example we want: poor services, bad roads, empty buildings, high levels of corruption and crime, areas too dangerous to enter just because you are who you are or not who you are? Strange role model.

Why is the government rushing Toronto's most important bill? Any management consultant would recognize this as a classic corporate takeover strategy: Change everything at once, confuse your enemy and do what you will. We're citizens. When did we turn into the enemy? Comments by the Premier clearly make me wonder, when he refers to our mayor as a CEO. I thought mayors were elected and CEOs ran companies.

I've generally stated my concerns about Bill 103, but this is the cart before the horse. The democratic process I think has already been stated in many ways, but I'd like to follow up. The government has shown total disregard for this public concern. As far as I understand it, an electoral majority is not a blank cheque. Two basic ideas of representative democracy which seem to be missing are: (1) The first obligation of those who win is to consider the whole of society and in particular the defeated minority; and (2) the elections are of a multitude of questions, local, province-wide and personal, so citizens should be part of the clarification of their opinions issue by issue. It's slow, it's painful, as most of you probably know, but it's democratic.

If politicians, as I stare at you, were as accountable as doctors, you'd be mired in malpractice suits. When laws or bills are put forward for the good of — who? — the dynamics of these policies do not show up on the bean count. The devastating effects to families, the people in poverty, hunger, homelessness, incomes, violence in the family, deaths, are not shown. Property is not affected; people are.

If one issue stands out in the history of Toronto that will have the most devastating effect, Bill 103 is it. Every citizen of southern Ontario will be affected by what happens. The democratic vote is now the most valuable issue facing the Toronto people in the surrounding cities. Let the citizens be accountable. Have a referendum, removing the burden from the politician. The citizens must themselves be represented by this vote because it is the most important; because it's too important to leave it to politicians.

I'd like to close in a philosophical view. The streets of this city are not like streets of all cities; they are sacred. It is in the streets that we meet the races face to face, which we don't encounter in our homes. We do not allow the world in our homes. The streets must stay at this Toronto level. This city makes us mix and mingle and move with a cosmopolitan ease that could not be found in a book or a controlled environment. Toronto is its city municipality and there has always been a wonderful balance in its social structure. The megacity will ghettoize it.

The US model, if taken upon, will be lost. Toronto will become a jungle, and I know very few people who want to live in a jungle.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much. Mr Silipo, two minutes.

Mr Silipo: Mr Violo, you said elections are of a multitude of issues. That was one of the points that you

made. But here I think the issue is even worse: I think it's the understanding of everybody who in any way paid attention to the issue of what Mike Harris was saying prior to the election about governance in Metropolitan Toronto that what he said was the opposite of what he's doing. So it's not even a case of this issue not being in people's minds. When the question was asked, whether it was through the Taxpayers Coalition questionnaire or in the debates, what Mike Harris said was that if he had to make some changes, what he would do is — and I think he did say he would make some changes. But he said that the changes would be based on maintaining the local level of government, and then deal with changing the services around.

So there's even a concern here, I think legitimately, that in fact what Mike Harris is doing is the opposite of what he promised, and for that reason, he doesn't have the mandate to do what he's doing.

Mr Violo: Very true. In dealing with the multitude of issues, the one thing I most dislike is that in the past number of weeks — when I talk to people, they all have an axe to grind. They all look at how it affects them. This is our trouble. When we always say, "I'm going to get a big tax break; it's not going to affect me," this is where our problem starts, and it stems from the same Mike Harris approach, which is basically "Take care of yourself."

Looking at what John Ralston Saul says, it's the big picture, for the good of all, even though it does not mean for you to gain somehow, but looking at the good of all, and it should be seen for the good of all. As I say, it is complicated and I don't dare address it. I am a person who understands all these mechanisms, but the results are always evident. They seem to be right on the street.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for appearing this evening. Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the hearings this evening.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair: I'd ask the committee to have a look now at the report of the subcommittee.

Mrs Marland: I'll move that report, Madam Chair. No, I guess I can't.

Mr Silipo: I'll move this as a member of the subcommittee.

The Vice-Chair: Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Carried.

We are adjourned until Monday at 9 am.

The committee adjourned at 2118.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Chair / Président: Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York PC)

*Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood L)
*Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough PC)
Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur L)
*Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)
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*Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview L)
*Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)
Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre / -Centre PC)
Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North / -Nord ND)
*Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre / -Centre PC)

**In attendance / présents*

Substitutions present / Membres remplaçants présents:

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West / -Ouest PC) for Mr Danford
Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber PC) for Mr Young
Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC) for Mr Hardeman
Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale PC) for Mrs Ross
Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South / -Sud L) for Mr Gravelle
Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC) for Mr Flaherty
Mr John L. Parker (York East / -Est PC) for Mr Tascona
Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt ND) for Mr Len Wood

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:

Mr Al Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale ND)
Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold ND)
Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South / -Sud PC)

Clerk pro tem /

Greffière par intérim: Ms Lisa Freedman

Staff / Personnel: Ms Lorraine Luski, Ms Susan Swift, Mr Jerry Richmond, research officers,
Legislative Research Service

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